

# **Our Children**

**A Practical Guide  
for Islamic Education**

**Instilling Good Behaviour & Morals into the Next Generation**

**Abdullah M. Abdul-Mu'ti**

**Translated by:**

***Dr. Reda Bedeir***

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## Translator's Foreword

Childhood is of a special importance in man's life as it is the phase when the preliminary stage of his physical, emotional and mental growth is formulated. A man is the product of his environment as the poet says: "A boy abides by what his father has acculturated in him while he was still young". Therefore, when the appropriate environment that is void of pollution and pests is available to hold this green plant, it will grow into a goodly tree whose roots are firmly fixed, and whose branches reach to the heavens and brings forth its fruit at all times. This is how to render good the individual, who represents the nucleus of society, and thus that would be a step on the path of the nation's return to its former status.

As a consequence, it was important to translate this high-quality book that presents a useful guide for raising children so as to take care of all aspects of their life during this period. This would secure him a sound life and a balanced personality. The most important aspect of this method is that it depends on the essentials the *Sunna* and *Jama'a*. it also adopts a moderate attitude in an age deplete with the darkness of ignorance and the domination of materialism; an age that fluctuates between two extremes: either extremism or permissibility. What makes this book more beautiful is that it pays attention to the element of entertainment by incorporating

some stories and anecdotes which raise the reader's interest and avoids boredom. In addition, it highlights the examples of our rich heritage as they became so scarce. It also comprises a number of various games that help children develop their physical and mental abilities and acquire aesthetic behavior and morals. I ask Allah that this worthy work would benefit all people and I ask Him to reward the book's writer and the translator. I would like to extend my thankfulness and deep gratitude to all those who participated with their truthful and conscientious efforts in producing this translation, namely Dr. Amal M. Al-Leithy, Mr. Hassan Ali, and Mr. Ahmad Sa'ad.

I wish it would be the beginning in a series of valuable books that care about presenting sound educational methods to construct the Islamic personality during its diverse stages. I wish Allah would throw His mercy on this nation and wakes it up from its long, deep sleep so that it would attempt to restore its status anew and to be indeed the best nation, enjoining what is right; forbidding what is wrong and believing in Allah.

*Dr. Reda Bedeir*

Cairo, 2/7/2002

# Preface

Allah Says,

﴿ *And He Created cattle for you; for your warmth, feeding and other uses. You also enjoy their beauty when you take rest and when you depart.* ﴾

(Al-Nahl: The Bees 5 - 6).

Horses, mules and donkeys represent a means of transportation as well as a source of beauty and adornment: "...to ride them and enjoy the adornment they have". This valuable gesture indicates the vision adopted by the Qur'an and Islam that see beauty as an original factor. Blessings are not confined to meeting the necessities of eating, drinking and riding but extended to satisfying other desires. They nourish the sense of beauty and human feelings of joy that supercede animal instincts and needs. Hence, comes the importance of this book that is considered a step on the road of realizing beauty and adhering to it as far as spirit, manners and conduct are concerned in order to change the face of life and make it more beautiful and delightful.

Before we soar in the horizons of this journey of beauty, we should get acquainted with beauty with its different kinds, then contemplate the meaning of education and some of its definitions so that we can reach the definition of the aesthetic education as it constitutes the backbone of the topic of this book.

## **Beauty in terms of Language and Prophetic Traditions**

*Lissanul-'Arab* (a dictionary) states that '*al-jamal*' (beauty) is a noun and the adjective is '*jameel*' (beautiful) and the verb is '*jamola*' (to become beautiful). Allah Says, ﴿ *You also enjoy their beauty when you take rest and when you depart.* ﴾ This means that you enjoy splendor and prettiness. Beauty covers both deeds and manners. '*jammal*' (To beautify) is another verb that means (to adorn) and '*tajammul*' (beautification) is another noun that is close to being artificial. You may pray to Allah to '*jammal*' someone (make him beautiful). A woman who is '*jameela*' or '*jam'la*' (beautiful) is a graceful one as mentioned in the tradition of *Al-Isra'* (the night journey), "Then he was met by a beautiful, graceful woman." In the same tradition, he brought a good and beautiful she-camel. Ibnul-Atheer said that Beauty refers to both images and meanings. We have another tradition that says, "Allah Is Beautiful and Loves beauty." This means that Allah Has the best acts and the perfect attributes. Tha'lab recited these poetic lines to Obiedullah bin Otba' whose meaning ran to this effect: It is not right to love someone very much unless he (she) is more beautiful (than you).

*'Al-Mojamala'* means treating nicely and '*al-mojami'l*' is the one who is able to exchange offences with you but gives them up for the sake of mutual compassion. Abu Du'ayb expressed this passion in these poetic lines that ran to the following effect: Adhere to your beauty and decency, you wounded heart (don't be sad in a humiliating way). You will meet your lover and be relieved."

Imam Al-Qurtobi has a wonderful definition of '*jamaal*' (beauty). He says, "Beauty is in shape and appearance; in



morality and emotions; and in acts. The beauty of morality lies in good qualities like knowledge, wisdom and justice. The beauty of acts lies in being appropriate for achieving interests and benefits of people and protecting them against evils. The beauty of appearance is easily realized by the eye that transfers it to the heart and to the spirit that unconsciously receive it. The beauty of cattle and animals is one of appearance that are seen by eyes and conceived by hearts."

When we come to think of the various kinds of beauty and imagine life without them, we will certainly realize our dire need of comprehensive and integrated aesthetic education. This was stressed by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) who urged us to adhere to all aspects of beauty and warned us against dispensing with them.

As to the beauty of morality, we read the Prophetic tradition reported by Muslim (The second authentic source of *Hadith*), "*Godliness lies in good manners*" and the one reported by Al-Termezi, "*The most perfect believers are those observing good manners more than others*" and the one reported by Ibn Majah to the effect that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was asked about the most thing that leads one to Paradise. He said, "*Piety and good manners*".

As to the beauty of acts, we read the Prophetic tradition reported by Imam Ahmad to the effect that a man said: O Messenger of Allah! Who are the best people? He (PBUH) said, "*Those whose live longer and practise good deeds.*" We also read the tradition reported by Ibn Majah, "*Whoever guides people to a good deed by offering it himself, he will be given rewards for his own deed and for their deeds without having any of the reward given to each of*

*them being lessened due to this. Similarly, whoever leads people to misguidance and they follow him, he will get sins for his own machination and will get sins equal to those given to the persons who follow his misguidance."*

As to good appearance, Imam Ahmad reports on the authority of Ibnu Mas'oud, may Allah Be Pleased with him, that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "*O Allah! As you have perfected my features, perfect my morals.*"

### **What is meant by Education?**

The term 'education' is one of the most comprehensive and well-known terms. Many definitions are given as attempts to explain the term. Each definition covers just one dimension, characteristic or objective pertaining to the term. Some definitions are given as follow:

Education is giving all possible forms of perfection and beauty to both body and soul.

Education means a method of transforming the mind into a new mind and turning the heart to be a new heart.

Education means improving all capabilities of a child in an integrated and suitable way.

Education means the preparation of man to lead a perfect life.

Education means moralizing the natural powers of a child so as to be able to lead a healthy and happy moral life.

### **Aesthetic Education: Its Concept and Benefits**

There are several definitions given to show the meaning of aesthetic education. Among these definitions is: "A term

referring to the educational aspect accompanying a child's feelings that makes him delicate and having a sense of beauty. This makes him happy and comforted in a manner that his feelings are moralized and his soul is elevated and this reflect a strong and sound will and determination."

Another definition given here is: "It includes all morals and directions that draws man's attention to feel and taste the beauty of life around him and even work for its betterment." However, there is a bad need, at the very beginning of this book, for a perfect definition of the term. This definition may be the following: "Aesthetic education is all educational means, theoretical or practical that make man beautiful in his manners, conduct, feelings and ideas and all other affairs. This will bring happiness and comfort to him and safety and peace to the whole society."

This definition shows that there are many benefits for aesthetic education for both individuals and society. When a child feels the sense of beauty, his appearance, his manners, his utterances and his acts will be signs of beauty. This will create an atmosphere of contentment and happiness for himself and all those around him. There will be some kind of coherence between his manners and morals and the whole universe that works on the very axis of beauty, for all are celebrating the praises of Allah and enjoying beauty.



# Introduction

First, we thank Allah who alone deserves glorification and is honourably and respectfully described as Lover of beauty. Allah, glory to Him, orders us to do all good deeds and He gets pleased when we practise all rites of Islam. Then, we send prayers and peace to whom Allah educated in the best way. Having the supreme morals and qualities, Our Prophet (PBUH) was a Qur'an moving among people. Finally, we supplicate that Allah May Be Pleased with the Prophet's family and his companions and followers who led a life of beauty in their thoughts and conduct. The same supplication goes to all people who faithfully adhere to the same path till the Day of Judgement.

When I selected the topic of aesthetic education, I was motivated by my belief that aesthetic values have disappeared from our life amid an atmosphere of materialism lived by the world in general and the Muslim nation in particular. Hence, I supplicate to Allah, glory to Him, to make this book a landmark of rightfulness that may restore to us and our children the beauty of spirit, manners and conduct we have lost.

I selected the period of childhood specifically for the state of collective orphanhood suffered by our children as expressed in some poetic lines whose meaning goes as follows: An orphan is not the one whose parents got relieved of the distress of life and left him in humiliation. Rather, he (she) is the one who has a careless mother and busy father.

Thus, I supplicate to Allah to make this book a source of guidance to fathers and mothers in this atmosphere of negligence and carelessness so that they may become a unique model like the one mentioned by Al-Raghibul-Asfahani when he said, "Al-Mansour (a Caliph in the Abbasid era) sent a messenger to the prisoners of the Ommaids to ask them about the worst thing they suffered in the jail. They answered, "The worst thing is that we are no longer able to educate our children."

As children are not raised through mere advice and sermons, I nearly adopted a practical method in this humble work since I tried to help parents and teachers to draw a real plan for the sake of our children's aesthetic education. I presented them with the basics, axes, pillars, goals and means of such a plan, underscoring its religious justification, historical evidence and educational outcome. In addition, I discussed some expected doubts and queries and dealt with them from the religious, educational and practical aspects. Then I gave the chance to parents to program this plan in view of their children's circumstances and abilities, praying that Allah, glory to Him, May Help them to apply this plan successfully and obtain good results. I also pray that Allah, the Most Wise and Powerful, May Count such a book as a good deed and forgive the mistakes it may contain.

*Abdullahi Mohammad Abdul-Mu'ti*

Rajab 1420 A.H./October 1999 A.D.

**Part One**  
**Children's Islamic Education**





## Introduction

When we stand for prayers in the presence of Allah, we are standing in front of the One to whom belongs all Might and Majesty. We stand at the greatest times of honour and the sweetest moments of worship and Allah, glory to Him, reminds us that He is the source of proper education when He says, ﴿Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.﴾ The word 'Lord' is explained by some scholars to mean 'educator,' since He, glory to Him, is the greatest educator in the universe. Hence, every wise man must know the source of correct social and educational philosophy (the Holy Qur'an) if he wants to educate himself and his children on a sound bases.

As we contemplate this great source of education (the Holy Qur'an), we remember that Allah says, ﴿You (the Prophet) virtually have supreme morals.﴾ This glorious verse affirms the Prophet's tradition in which he says, "My Lord educated me in the best way." Thus, Allah, glory to Him, willed that the Prophet's life be a practical application of the Holy Qur'an. He (PBUH) was actually a walking Qur'an among the people.

Islam urges us to continually think, ponder and achieve wisdom. There is a saying that goes, "The main target of a believer is to seek wisdom. Whatever its source may be, he is the one entitled to have it."

As we consider this quality within the context of Islamic education, we note that wisdom loses its essential quality if it contradicts the provisions, principles and rules of Islam. Thus, we are allowed to make use of some theories and applications of educational sciences, provided they do not contradict the rules and fundamentals of Islam. Hence, the learning systems and educational theories put forward by both East and West are not to be considered the latest innovations made by man, but as human experiences and perceptions that may be right or wrong. We regard them merely as material from which we can apply whatever is applicable within our framework of conditions and requirements, while we abandon that part which inclines or drives toward polytheism, corruption and blasphemy. The corrupted part of any philosophy or system is purged, refined and nourished with faith in Allah and deep contemplation of the universe around us. In this way all sciences and studies can be converted to an effective means of learning and wisdom as well as a path to faith and knowledge.

Islam balances the education of children and adults by including the Qur'an, the Prophet's (PBUH) traditions, *ijtihad* (independent judgment or individual discretion based on Islamic knowledge) and wisdom. If Muslims in general and parents and teachers in particular desire a happy life for themselves and for their children, then they are required to maintain this balance of Islam, especially matters relating to our children's beliefs, orientations, personality and future life.

This is the correct stance towards a prosperous childhood in the light of Islamic *Shari'ah* (law) and the Islamic education of our children.

## **Beauty ... Between Parenthood and the Pure Nature of our Children**

Eyes were created to see unless they become blind, ears were created to hear unless they become deaf, and man's instinct was created to adhere to righteousness unless it becomes distorted and removed from its state of perfection, goodness and virtue.

Children were created with a nature abounding in beauty that is willingly ready to receive, be influenced and ready to interact with beauty and be motivated by love. The best evidence of this reality is these glorious verses in *surat At-Teen* (4-6) which says, ﴿ *We Created man in the best form. Then We threw him to the lowest degrees (of worldly life) except for those who had faith (in Allah) and adhered to good deeds.* ﴾ The 'best form' here means recognizing righteousness and adhering to it. It also means love of generosity and nobility and observing such characteristics when man is alone or dealing with others. It also aims at seeking the highest degree of perfection and giving it top priority, yet many people are enslaved by their desires, whims and fancies to the extent where they are far removed from perfection and become fully involved in the world of lust.

Based on this inherent noble form, man has a natural disposition to select decent words and resort to tenderness when

addressing and dealing with people. The famous educationalist, Jean Jacques Rousseau, says, "Absolute good is implanted in the hearts of people and is not taught to them. If they consult these hearts, they will be in the right, but they are corrupted by the conditions of their society."

For the sake of safeguarding this nature and protecting it from the lowest degree of worldly life that is devoid of righteousness, goodness and beauty, Islam considers the family responsible for the children's *fitrah* (unblemished nature). It holds parents and teachers accountable for any deviation in this nature. This concept is stressed by a *Hadith* narrated by Abu Hurairah, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), in which the Prophet (PBUH) says: *"Every infant is born with pure nature. His parents may then make him Christian, Jew or Magi. Just as a beast gives birth to a full, perfect beast, not to a one without a nose or a limb."* Abu Hurairah then recited, ﴿ *This is the nature that Allah instills in people. There is no change in Allah's way of creation. This is the valuable religion...* ﴾ (Surat Al-Room 30) The honorable Companion Abu Hurairah understood that this nature is an infant's readiness to accept the valuable religion, the faith of monotheism and that Allah's rules never change with all infants; so he mentioned this glorious verse to explain the meaning.

The family is the original educational incubator that either breathes life into or kills this nature. Thus, Allah makes it a right for the embryo that his (her) would-be parents select each other on a sound bases. A father must choose a good mother for his children as the mother is the mistress of the house, who is entrusted with an important task. She is the foundation of the family system and the source of the family members' happiness.

If she is good, she will build her home on solid foundations, fill it with delight, implant good manners and habits in her children and protect them against bad behaviour and habits. Similarly, if the mother is bad, she will sow the seeds of corruption in her children and lead them to the wrong path. Hence, there are many *Hadiths* in which the Prophet (PBUH) urges would-be husbands to choose the best wives. Ad-Daraqutni narrated that A'isha, (may Allah Be Pleased with her), narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *"Select good mothers for your children."* Amro bnil'A'as, (may Allah be Pleased with him), also narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *"Don't marry women for their beauty, as it can be the cause of their doom. And don't marry them for their money, as it can be the cause of their tyranny. But marry them for their religious commitment. And an enslaved black ugly woman who adheres to faith is better."*

The faithful woman, even if she is not beautiful, is always better, as she is a real treasure kept by a man for his children in both his presence and absence. At-Tirmidhi narrated that Thawban said: When the verse *"Those who treasure up gold and silver and do not spend them for the cause of Allah..."* (Al-Tawbah : 34) was revealed, we were accompanying the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in some of his travels. Some Companions said: Was it revealed concerning gold and silver? We'd like to know the best form of money to deal in. Then the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, *"The best thing is to have a tongue that praises Allah, a heart that thanks Him and a good wife that helps a believer to be more faithful."*

Within the framework of the good selection of wives and its effectiveness in children's education, Abel-Aswadudl-Du'ali said

to his children, "I treated you well when you were young , when you became adults and even before you were born. They said: How did you treat us well before we were born? He said: I selected a modest woman for you."Furthermore, Umaru ibnel Khattab, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), was asked about the father's duties towards his child. He answered, "To select a good mother, to choose a good name for him and to teach him the Qur'an."

Just as the embryo needs a good mother, who cares for him (her) while he is in her womb, so he needs a good father who looks after both he and his mother. Here the responsibility lies on the wife's family and her custodian, who must not marry their daughter to a bad suitor. They must be sure that the suitor is pious in an age full of deviated doctrines and corrupt views. So, the Prophet (PBUH) ordered (the wife's family) to marry their daughter to a pious, well-mannered man. Ibnu Majah narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "*Marry your daughter to a religious, pious man; if you don't, there will be great sedition and corruption.*"

The great scholar Al-Mubarakfuri explains this *Hadith* to this effect, "Since if you marry her to a merely rich or influential person, most women may remain without husbands, and most men without wives. Hence, adultery will prevail and the women's custodians will be inflicted with dishonour, a thing that will increase sedition and corruption, confuse family trees and eliminate piety and modesty."Moreover, the author of "The Family Constitution in the light of the Qur'an"says, "Is there worse sedition or more serious corruption that does harm to the family and society's religion and morals than marrying a girl to a libertine atheist, who does not care for honour, jealousy or

modesty. That man may easily force his wife to unveil her body, mix with men, drink wine and dance with men. He may also make fun of her religion and turn her into a loose woman."

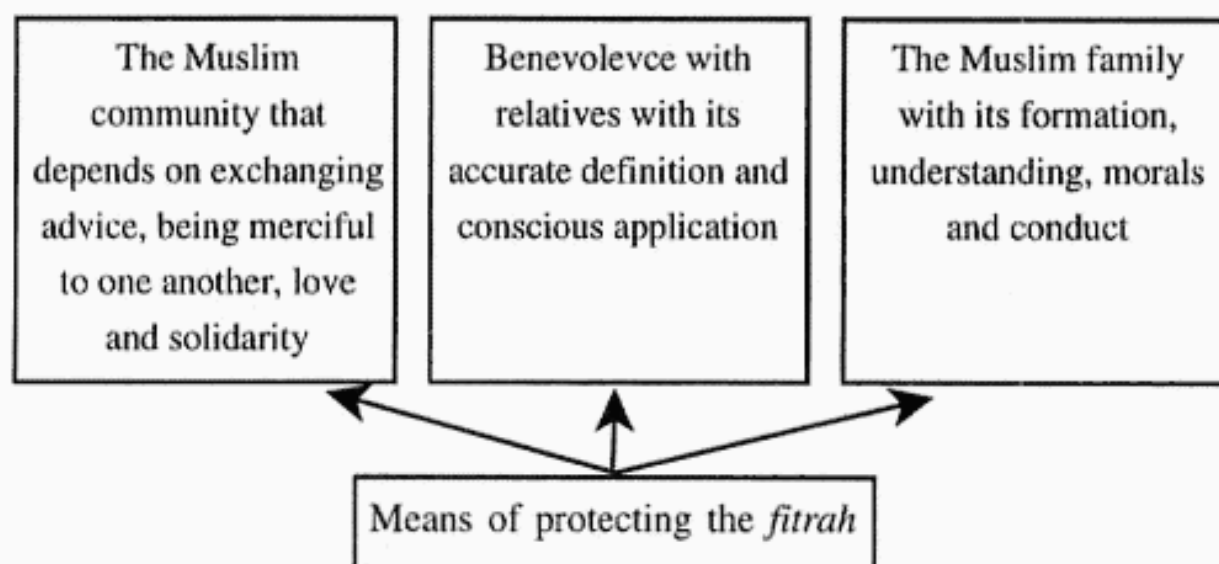
Islam not only calls for the correct formation of the Muslim family, but it also establishes sound rules of dealing between the spouses. It outlines each party's duties and rights and renders them obligatory in order to guarantee an honorable life for the family within the context of Islam. Islam thus aims at the continuation of the family relationship in a way that enables the future generations to be good Muslims.

Islam focuses on maintaining the pure nature of children. It places the innocent child in the haven of the family so he/she will be formed and molded upon morals, understanding and good conduct. The family itself is also protected from deviation and perversion and is assisted to do every good deed. This role of the family is one of being an incubator and this role is represented in its benevolence with relatives. In this context Ibnu Abi Hamza stated, "... a comprehensive approach aimed at achieving the most possible good (to relatives) and preventing the least degree of evil."

This incubator stands as a safeguard protecting children in general and orphans in particular, as care for an orphan is the duty of his (her) closest relative. If this closest relative fulfils their duty, the other relatives are not held to blame. However, if the closest relative fails to do this duty and mistreats the orphan, the other relatives must intervene in order to remedy the situation. If they fail to do so, all people who learn about this matter must inform the ruler to step in and punish the offending relative or appoint another person, whether a man or a woman,

to act as a sponsor and custodian of this orphan. The care for orphans is a duty that must be achieved by at least some people within the Muslim nation. Where that duty is fulfilled, the other people are not held to blame. Care for an orphan includes all that which he needs such as suitable education and learning; if he is poor, he is taught a craft and if he is rich, he is given appropriate academic instruction.

When considering the social aspect of Islam, we find the incubator of "benevolence with relatives" is put in a larger circle that depends on brotherhood, love, solidarity, exchanging advice and being merciful to one another. This idea is extended to the Muslim community, as it has the duty of protecting this nature from distortion through the influence of deviant minds or hearts.



Islam guides the Muslims to make use of wisdom whatever its source may be. It also aims to maintain the pure nature of man, regardless of his origin, under the umbrella of the Muslim community that depends on exchanging advice, being merciful to one another, love and solidarity. *Imam Ahmad* narrated that *Al-Aswadu ibn Saree'* said, "One day, I fought with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and scored victory. That day, the



Muslims killed many people from among the enemy including children. When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was informed of this incident, he said: *I wonder why some people killed too many to the extent that they killed offspring?* A man said: Aren't they the sons of atheists? The Prophet (PBUH) then said: *The best of you are sons of atheists. Don't kill children. Don't kill children. Every soul is born with a pure nature till it expresses itself. A child is made into a Christian or Jew by his own parents.*" Here the beauty of the Muslim community becomes perfect as it is divided into two parts:

One: A pure clear nature "regardless of its origin."

Two: Hearts that are filled with love and sympathy and seek to protect this nature from perversion, deviation and pollution by all means and methods.

In this way, all members of the Islamic community are brought up in accordance with good manners and pious conduct in an atmosphere of modesty, purity, love and benevolence.

## Home Environment ... and Education in its Purest Form

Ibnul-Qayyimul-Jawziyya said in his "*Tuhfatul-Mawdood fi Ahkaamul-Mawlood*" (A Precious Book for those Interested in the affairs of Newborns ), "A child badly needs morals. If he is neglected, he may fall prey to many bad qualities, such as rage, argumentativeness, carelessness, rashness, cruelty and greed. It is difficult for him to dispose of such defects once he grows up, as they become deeply rooted characteristics. If he does not fight these qualities with all available means, he will be disgraced one day. So, it is noticeable that most people are ill-mannered due to bad education in their early years."



Children learn about their religion, morals, and decent behaviour through their home and family. Islam lays down a set of ethics and rules of conduct for the Muslim family and these are to be followed by both children and adults for the sake of leading a happy and honourable life. To be practical, we are

going to talk about some important morals and decent behavior that are badly needed today and which were taught to the children in the era of the Prophet (PBUH).

### **Ability to keep secrets**

Thabit narrated that Anas, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), said, "While I was playing with other children, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) passed by us. He greeted us and asked me to run an errand for him. When I returned home, my mother asked me: 'Why are you late?' I answered: 'The Messenger of Allah asked me to run an errand for him?' She said: 'What is it?' I said: 'It is a secret.' She said: 'Don't tell any body about the secret of the Messenger of Allah.' I swear if I had talked to someone (about that errand), I would have talked to you, Thabit."

Let's consider the words said by Anas: 'I swear if I had talked to someone, I would have talked to you, Thabit (about the secret of the Messenger of Allah).' We are not listening to a child but to an old sheikh who tells his young followers about one of his childhood memories. We are listening to the great Companion, Anas, the preacher of Basra, narrating an impressive story of his early life to his young disciples who sit in a circle around him to get acquainted with the details of this story that continued to move their scholar right up to that moment.

Years passed and Anas moved from childhood to adolescence; from boyhood to youth, to manhood, to old age. He lived about one hundred years and witnessed the rise and fall of several states and still guards the secret of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). He never divulged that secret from the time he knew it when he was playing with other children years before.

Even he says to one of his best disciples: 'I swear if I had talked to someone, I would have talked to you, Thabit.'

## Honesty

Abdullah bin Yasir, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), said, "My mother sent me with a bunch of grapes to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) but I ate them. My mother then met the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) and asked him: 'Did Abdullah bring you a bunch of grapes?' He answered: 'No...'. Then when the Messenger of Allah met me at any time, he said: *Treachery, treachery!!*"



Muhammad Hussain, a great Islamic thinker, comments on this tradition saying, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) just drew the boy's attention in a way that indicates joking more than blame. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) repeated this statement to teach the boy and remind him that he had committed a mistake and he must avoid such a thing in the future. As this matter is related to honesty, the Prophet (PBUH) resorted to repetition without insulting the child.

## Telling the truth

Adherence to right and truth must be maintained even in the most insignificant affairs. Imam Muslim narrated that Asma'au bint Yazeed said, "Oh, Messenger of Allah, if a girl from among us says that she doesn't like something but she does, is it considered a lie? He said: *Lying is written (in Allah's records) as lying and a small lie is as a small lie.*"

As the warning against telling lies here is harsh even against small lies, every parent or teacher must never tell lies to his (her) children to make them stop crying, attract them to something or appease their anger...etc. If parents and teachers are not committed to truthfulness, they make their children used to this despicable act, through inspiration, imitation and bad example. Lying is one of the worst habits and the meanest of manners. In addition, children who are lied to lose confidence in their educators and belittle their advice and preaching. Hence, we see the first educator and the perfect guide, Muhammad (PBUH) warn parents and teachers against telling a lie to their children, even with the aim of distraction, appeasement or amusement in order not to be written down in Allah's records as liars. Abu Dawoud and Al-Baihaqqy narrated that Abdullah bin 'Amir said, "While the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was visiting us, my mother called me saying: 'Come to me and I'll give you something.' Then the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: 'What are you going to give him?' She said: 'I'll give him dates.' He said: 'Be sure that if you gave him nothing, it would be recorded as a lie.'"



### **Good faith**

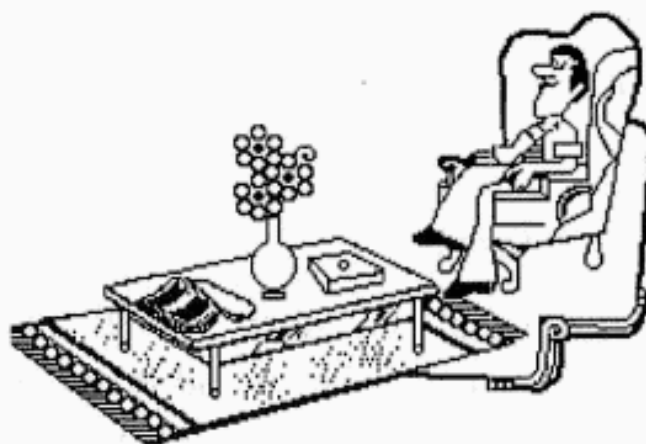
Clearing the heart of ill intentions provides man with psychological balance and leads him to love his community and practice benevolence with its members. Hence, we find the

Prophet (PBUH) advised the grown-up Anas bin Malik to purge himself from vice in the morning and in the evening; to forgive those who offend him and empty his heart and mind of satanic temptation and insinuation. Let's listen to this great wonderful call narrated by At-Tirmidhi who describes this *Hadith* as *gharib* that means here "strange." Anas, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said to me, "*If you are able to get up and go to bed without having bad intentions towards anyone, please do. Oh, my son, this is a part of my teachings; and he who gives life to my teachings, gives life to me; and he who gives life to me, accompanies me in Paradise.*"

Paradise and the company of the Prophet (PBUH) will be the reward of those who clear their hearts of fraud, grudge, envy and villainy. Good faith is virtually a noble decency that we need, together with our children, for the sake of this worldly life as well as the life to come.

### **Cleanliness and order**

Imam At-Tirmidhi narrated in a *sahih* (sound) *Hadith* that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "*Allah is good; clean and likes cleanliness; generous and likes generosity; and free-handed and likes open-handedness. So, clean your house, courts and don't be like the Jews.*" This is the usual condition of the Muslim home that it is filled with cleanliness and



beauty and radiates with delight and pleasure for its inhabitants and visitors. Abu Dawud also narrated a *sahih* (sound) *Hadith*, that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "... As you come to visit your relatives and brothers (in Islam), look after your carriages and dress well in order to look nice in the eyes of people as Allah doesn't like abuse." This is a supreme moral that must be practiced by a Muslim towards his relatives and brothers in Islam. Muslims must take care of their homes and clear them of any disgusting, unpleasant objects, a thing that demands continual tidiness and beautification on the part of all family members.

The Messenger (PBUH) was keen that children at an early age abide by this moral. Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrate that Anas bin Malik, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, "... I had a little brother called Abu 'Umyyer. When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) visited us, he said: *Oh, Abu 'Umyyer, what about the small bird (which my brother played with)?* It happened that the call to prayer was announced while the Messenger was at our home. Then he ordered us to sweep and clean the rug on which he was sitting and led us in the prayers."

When the Prophet (PBUH) ordered Anas' family, including young Anas and little 'Umyyer, to clean the rug, this was practical training for them to be clean. Cleanliness is an important part of Islamic conduct that must be taught to children at an early age in order to become an inherent quality in them. When Anas and 'Umyyer saw the Prophet's practical behavior when he ordered that the rug be cleaned, they undoubtedly acquired this educational lesson by means of his good example.

## Asking for permission

Allah says in *surat* (An-Noor-58), ﴿ Oh, Believers. Those under your control as well as your children who have not reached sexual maturity yet, must ask for permission to enter your own rooms three times (a day): before *al-fajr* (dawn) prayers, when you take off your clothes at noon and after *isha'a* (evening) prayers. These are three timings that must be



respected. You are not to blame if you enter one another's rooms at other times. Thus, Allah shows you rules as He is Most Omniscient and Most Wise. ﴿

Asking for permission is a duty on both children and adults. It is important for the Muslim home to maintain decency and organize relationships. Decent behavior even extends outside the house. The Glorious Qur'an trains children to ask for permission; it orders parents to teach their children this moral and adopts a piecemeal approach, in a manner that a child asks for permission before he (she) becomes sexually mature in three crucial times in the parents' marital life, namely before *al-fajr* (dawn), at noon and after *isha'a* (evening). These are the times at which the parents usually sleep and are intimate with each other.

Some people may believe that children do not pay attention when they see the parts of their parents' bodies that must be covered. However, it is known that should children be exposed to seeing the parts of their parent's bodies that should be covered, these young, impressionable minds can be negatively affected.



The best practical training for children to get used to asking for permission, can be deduced from what is narrated by Al-Bukhari, that Anas, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), said, "I was a servant of the Prophet (PBUH). I said to him once: 'I am used to entering (rooms) without permission.' Then he (PBUH) said: *'Stand as you are, son. Matters have changed. Don't enter without asking for permission.'*"

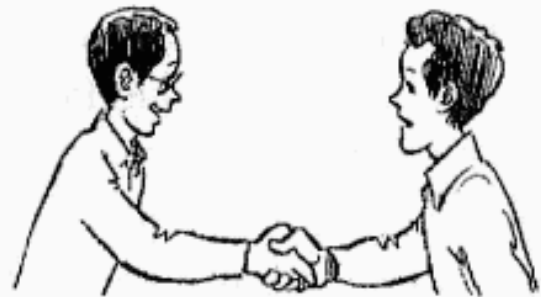
When the Messenger (PBUH) taught his Companions these morals, he was careful to direct them to effective practical means. Kaldah ibnul-Hanbal said, "Once I visited the Prophet (PBUH) and didn't greet him. Then the Prophet (PBUH) said: *'Go outside again and say: Peace upon you; may I come in?'*" In this *Hadith* narrated by Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi , the Messenger (PBUH) not only told Kaldah what he should have done, but he ordered him to perform this moral practically in the required manner.

The decency of asking for permission is more clearly understood when we read what is narrated by Al-Bukhari that Anas, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), said, "The house doors of the Messenger (PBUH) were knocked at with fingers and the forefathers used to knock the doors of their scholars with their nails."

## **Greeting**

The family must teach their children how to greet others, meet them and say goodbye to them, in a way becomes a social practice. Children must learn that greeting and saying 'peace be upon you' is an Islamic rite and moral; and that responding to a greeting is a religious duty. Greeting also denotes a

good-tempered and familiar personality. The selected words for greeting are 'peace be upon you' that make others feel secure, relaxed and honored. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was careful to teach the children of Muslims these



human values and enjoin them with religious concepts to be useful to individuals and the community as a whole. At-Tirmidhi narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said to Anas bin Malik, (may Allah be pleased with him), "*Oh, son! If you arrive home, greet your family in order to be blessed together with your family.*" *Ash-Shaiykh* (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) narrate that whenever the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) passed by children, he greeted them. In this way, the Prophet (PBUH) made sure the children felt that they were of social value. He implanted the feelings of manhood into them and formed the features of their future characters.

## **Neighborliness**

A child deals with his (her) neighbors, according to certain ethics that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) urged parents to teach their children. These include sharing their pains and doing them no harm whatsoever. For instance, a child must not come out of his house while holding some food or fruit in his hand to tease the children of the neighbors, who might not have money to buy their children the same thing or who might be in financial distress that impedes them to buy such a thing at that time. In this way, a child gets accustomed to eating at home, not in the

street. This is something that protects observes public decency. Al-Khara'ti and At-Tabarani reported that Amro ibn Shu'ayb narrated that his father heard his grandfather saying that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "... *If you buy fruit, provide your neighbor with some. If you don't, neither let your neighbors see it nor let your children come out eating the fruit in front of the children of your neighbors to tease them.*"

In summary, these supreme ethics and high morals formulated a unique Muslim generation whose members wished good to one another, were generous with guests; treated neighbors well; spoke for the sake of good or kept silent; were delighted with good deeds and upset by bad deeds; never harmed or frightened others; never divulged their brothers' secrets; feared no one but Allah; told the truth even if it was against their own interest, the interest of their parents or their relatives; adhered to right actions; and were faithful to Allah and people...

## **A Unique Society and a New Generation**

The Muslim society is like a tree full of shade under which children enjoy its good fruit. This society is the umbrella of justice and the oasis of mercy. It is the sweetest hope for supreme care, and the perfect protection for children who can hardly find another community to grant them a great, marvelous, and innocent childhood. This is because the members of the Islamic society are joined by holy and sacred ties that gather people from all over the world, around the word of Allah. In this way, conflict turns to love; hatred to familiarity; and estrangement to friendship and amicability.

Every one who belongs to the Muslim society is a member of a big family that relies on brotherhood and love, cooperation and sincere affection. An old man in the era of the Prophet (PBUH) called a young man saying "my nephew." If the young man's father didn't embrace Islam, the old man would call him "my son." Al-Bukhari narrated in *Al-Adabul-Mufrid* (Unique Decencies) from As-Sa'ab bin Hakam, from his father, that his grandfather said, "Once I came to Umar bin Al-Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him). He called me 'my nephew' then asked me about my family tree. When he learned that my father had not embraced Islam yet, he called me 'my son, oh! my son'. This incident comes within the context of this part of the glorious verse, ﴿Believers are virtually brothers﴾ (Al-Hujuraat: 10).

As a large family, the Muslim society depends on three impressive religious and moral pillars when dealing with children. These are:

### **1- Wishing good for every Muslim**

Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrate from Abu Mussa, (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, *"The believers support each other as if they were a strong building."* In this *Hadith*, the Messenger (PBUH) likens the believers to



an edifice whose bricks strengthen each other to keep the edifice robust. A spoilt brick can badly affect the other bricks with the passage of time, unless it is speedily remedied. Hence, wishing good to every Muslim is an obligation in Islam, an evidence of faith and an outcome of the pure, sound creed. Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrate that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *"I swear by Him in Whose Hand is my soul, one does not become faithful unless he wishes his brother what he wishes for himself."*

Let's contemplate this wonderful picture that gives a clear view of a sincere Muslim's feelings towards other Muslims and expresses his behavior and morals towards them. At-Tabarani narrated that Abu Buraida Al-Islami said, "A man called the names of Ibn 'Abbass, (may Allah be pleased with him) and his father. Then Ibn 'Abbas said: 'You are cursing me while I have three good qualities: I am bestowed with the blessing of explaining the verses of the Holy Qur'an and I wish all people

have the same blessing; I become delighted when I hear about a Muslim fair ruler though I may not need him in the future for settling a dispute; and I become happy when I hear that a Muslim province is granted rain while I have no interests in this province."

Through such feelings, the members of society both young and old become integrated. When a believer, who wishes good for all Muslims, sees that another believer has something wrong with his religion, he does his best to repair his brothers' shortcoming. Some of our pious predecessors say, "Those who love for the sake of Allah see through the light of Allah. They show sympathy to those committing sins, though they hate their deeds, they pity and preach to them so that they may give up sins. They have mercy upon the sinners' bodies that may be tortured with fire (in the hereafter). A believer does not become a real believer unless he wishes good for others. If he finds that his brother has a virtue that he does not have, he wishes to have such a virtue. These lines come in accordance with the words of Allah in *Surat al-Mutafifeen*: 26).

Thus, children are provided with the utmost degree of care, education and guidance. All members of society work for the good and interest of children in a harmonious atmosphere. Parents and teachers remedy children's shortcomings and encourage them to draw on the good qualities of others. The other members of the society are keen to transfer virtues to them and show them features of the straight path.

## 2- Giving advice to every Muslim

*Imam* Muslim reported that Tameem Ad-Dari, (may Allah be pleased with him) said that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "Advice giving is (real) faith. We (the Companions) said: To whom? He said: *To Muslim rulers and laymen for the*



*sake of Allah, His Book and His Messenger.* "While the Muslim society is based on strong foundations at the top of which comes faith in Allah, love and fraternity, it is surrounded by fences to protect these foundations. Advice is prescribed to act as a fence warding off the insinuations of the Devil and his aides. Advice eliminates errors and leads to the straight path. It corrects the course of human nature that goes astray at times. Hence, the Prophet's description of faith being advice giving, is clarified. What is meant here is that faith is basically established on counseling.

Our pious predecessors hastened to give pieces of advice as they promised the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) to give sincere advice to every Muslim and they sincerely sought to keep their promise. If they had broken this pledge, they would have committed a sin. *Imam* Muslim narrated that Jareer bin Abdullah, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), said, "I promised the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) to obey him and respond to his orders as much as I can and advise every Muslim." Days passed and Jareer kept his promise to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH).

He did not forget the pledge, but was committed to it on every occasion, particularly in giving advice to every Muslim. He advised Muslims in all conditions. Once, he ordered his servant to buy him a horse. The servant bought a horse for three hundred *dirhams* and the seller came with him to Jareer to get the price. Jareer said to the seller: Your horse is worth more than three hundred. Would you sell it for four hundred? The seller said: That's Ok, Abu Abdullah. Jareer again said: Your horse is still better than this amount. Would you sell it for five hundred? Jareer went on increasing the price till the amount reached eight hundred. Some people wondered why Jareer behaved in such a manner. He indicated that he had promised the Messenger of Allah to give advice to every Muslim.

In order to realize the benefits children can get through advice giving, let's consider this phrase: "... to advise every Muslim" or the phrase: "Advice giving... to Muslim... laymen", with children at the top of the list. Advice giving is aimed at guiding Muslims to their good in both this world and the life to come. It also protects them from harm, eliminates their defects, meets their needs, brings benefits to them, urges them to do good deeds, orders them to give up vice in a lenient and faithful way, pities them, respects the old, puts mercy on the young, preaches to them from time to time, calls upon them to abandon fraud and envy, teaches them their religion, and incites them to wish good to others and defend their property and honor.

### **3- Solidarity with every Muslim**

Solidarity in Islam is the evidence of faithful brotherhood and the road to sincere love, great happiness, Paradise and



Allah's Satisfaction. Abu Dawud narrated through the *Hadith* narrated by Abu Huraira, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "*A believer is a mirror to a believer; he protects his property and defends him.*" In another narration by At-Tirmidhi, we read the tradition as follows, "*Every one of you is a mirror to his brother; if you find a shortcoming in him, help him dispose of it.*" In The Two *Sahihs* (The Two Books of Sound *Hadiths*, i.e. Al-Bukhari and Muslim), Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "*There was a merchant who gave loans to people. If he found a man in distress, he would say to his subordinates: Leave the loan to him so that Allah may forgive me. Due to these pious acts, Allah forgave him.*" At-Tabarani narrated through the *Hadith* narrated by Umar that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "*The best deed is to delight a believer through providing him with clothes, food or any of his needs.*"

Solidarity has several forms that unite with each other to produce a society that depends on guidance, piety, love and fraternity. We find the material solidarity in the tradition narrated by *Imam* Muslim, in which the Prophet (PBUH) said, "*He who helps a believer to overcome a hardship of those we face in our life, will be protected by Allah from one of the horrors of the Day of Judgement. He who assists an insolvent person, will be helped by Allah in this life and the hereafter. He who conceals the shortcomings of a Muslim, his defects will be hidden in this life and the hereafter. Allah assists that who gives a hand to his brother.*"

Another kind is the psychological solidarity. True brotherhood is the one in which a brother feels that his brothers always support him and share his ups and down. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "*The believers support each other as if they*

were a strong building." Hence, faithful brotherhood becomes a double blessing with its material and psychological sides.

The solidarity of knowledge is indicated by *Imam Al-Ghazali* when he says, "Your brother' to knowledge is not less than his need to money. If you are learned, you must provide him with some of your knowledge. If you teach and guide him while he does not act upon such learning, you must advise him."



Topping the types of solidarity is spiritual solidarity. Believers need sittings of pondering and contemplation, in which every brother transfers some of his faith and high spirit to his brother in a way that enables them all to march faithfully in the road of Allah. So, Ibnu Rawaha said to Abi Ad-Darda'a, may Allah Be Pleased with both of them, while he was holding his hand, "Come on to live in faith for a while, as hearts change very quickly."

Solidarity with its different types has a great positive impact on children as indicated practically in the acts of the Prophet (PBUH), his noble Companions and good followers. *Imam Ahmad* narrated through the tradition narrated by the daughter of Al-Khabbab ibnul Aratt in which she said: Khabbab went out to fight in a (Muslim) company. So, the Prophet (PBUH) looked after us to the extent that he milked our goat and filled a bowl with milk (i.e. more than usual). When Khabbab came back, he milked the goat but at its usual rate." Abu Dawoud narrated that,

"Zayd bin Haratha went to Mecca and brought the daughter of Hamza (an uncle of the Prophet). Then Ga'far (a cousin of the Prophet) said: I take her. I'm more entitled to having her. She is my cousin and her aunt lives with me. An aunt is a mother. 'Ali said: I'm more entitled to having her. She is my niece. I travelled to bring her. When the Messenger of Allah learned about the incident, he judged that the daughter of Hamza go to Ga'far saying: *"An aunt is a mother."*

A forefather used to care for the children of his brother (in Islam) forty years after the brother's death. He visited them every day to meet their needs and give them money. The children were thus compensated for the death of their father and they might have seen more good at the hands of their new sponsor. A brother always frequents his brother's house saying, "Do you need edible oil? do you need salt? Do you need any other thing? He did that while his brother had no idea."

In a nutshell, adhering to these three pillars (wishing good, advice giving and solidarity), the early Muslims implanted these aesthetic features in the souls of children, without feeling tired or bored. Let's look at this incident that could bear the title of (fraternity and love). *Imam Ahmad* and others narrate, "When the Messenger (PBUH) saw two little girls fighting each other, he held them with his hand and separated them while he was praying." Another incident under the name of (putting mercy on birds and animals) goes to this effect. *Imam Muslim* narrated, "Abdullah bin Omar passed a group of boys from Quraiysh who put birds on a high place and shot them with arrows. When the boys saw Ibn Omar, they disappeared. He then said disapprovingly: Who did that? Allah damns those who act like

this. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) also damns those who set a creature as a target for arrow throwing." Al-Bukhari also narrated, "When Anas, may Allah Be Pleased with him, saw some boys who tied a hen and threw arrows at it, he said to them: the Messenger of Allah ordered not to take birds as targets."

Thus, the Muslim society has become a distinguished and enlightened society. It leads children to the straight path through the Qur'an and faith and their aesthetic values to constitute a new generation.

## Beauty and Basics of Life

There is no doubt that parents have an instinct to love their children, protect them and put mercy on them. They are inclined to pity them and seek their interests. So, it is no wonder that the

Glorious Qur'an depicts these sincere feelings of parents in the best form. Once it describes children as the flower of life, ﴿Money and children are the flower of this world life...﴾

(Al-Kahf: 46). Another time it considers them a great blessing that demands the

praise of Allah, ﴿We (Allah) provided you with money and children and made you more plentiful in number...﴾ (Al-Isra'a: 6). A third time it regards them as the dearest thing, ﴿And who (the slaves of The Most Gracious) pray: Oh, Allah, grant us wives and children who please us (because they obey Allah) and make us leaders of faith to Muslims.﴾ (Al-Forqaan: 74).



These three verses indicate how far is the great emotion put by Allah into the hearts of parents towards their children. This emotion is the stimulus that pushes parents to educate their children, care for their affairs and seek their interests.

Since Islam is careful to observe the aesthetic aspect of education even in the early years of children, it activates this emotion in the hearts of parents through faith before and after parents are bestowed with children. This is seen as a psychological preparation and practical steps towards forming a good environment in which children can acquire an aesthetic education. Al-Tabarani narrated through honest men, "Salama, nursemaid of the Prophet's son, Ibraheem, said: Oh, Messenger of Allah, You promise men much good and don't do that with women! He said: *Did your female friends incite you to say that?* She said: Yes. They asked me to do that. He said: *"Is it not satisfied to one of you to be pregnant while her husband is pleased with her and to have the same reward of a fasting man who fights for the sake of Allah. And when she is attacked by labour, the creatures of the heaven and the earth do not know the enormous good awaiting her. And when she gives birth, she will be rewarded (by Allah) for every dose of milk and every suck taken by her child. If she stays up at night for the sake of her child, she will get as much recompense as that taken by a person who liberates seventy slaves for the sake of Allah."*

Al-Tabarani also narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *"Thanks to her pregnancy, labour and nursing, a woman is like one who fights for the cause of Allah."*

What is mentioned above is considered psychological preparation for mothers. As to fathers, Al-Tabarani narrated the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, *"If a woman gives birth to a baby girl, Allah, Glory to Him, sends (her) an Angel who brings plenty of blessings with him and says: A weak (female) came out of a weak (female). He who is responsible for her is helped till the Day of Judgement."* Imam Ahmad and Al-Bazaar narrated that the

Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "He who has three daughters and educates them, puts mercy on them, and meets their needs, will surely win the Paradise."



Some Companions asked: Oh, Messenger of Allah,

what about two daughters? He answered: *Two are treated on the same footing.* Some Companions then thought that if they asked about one daughter, he (the Messenger) would give the same answer. *Imam Muslim narrated about Abu Horaira that the Messenger of Allah said, "You may spend a dinar for the cause of Allah, a dinar to liberate a slave, a dinar to help a poor man, and a dinar to meet the needs of your family. The best dinar is that you spend to meet the needs of your family."* Al-Tabarani narrated in Al-Kabeer (The Big One) in an accurate way that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "If a father looks at his son and gets pleased with that, he is granted recompense as if he sets a slave free. Some Companions said: What about three hundred and sixty looks? He said: *Allah is Greater (i.e. than your expectations).*"

When such an emotion dominates the heart and steers the mind, fathers' pains turn into hopes and their sadness into joy. Out of love, sympathy, truthfulness and faith, they rush into educating their children in an aesthetic manner (whether in actions, morals or emotions) with the first moments in their children's life or even before.

When a child comes out of the safe place in his mother's womb and sends out the cry of life, relatives and friends get very

pleased with this good news. All people present congratulate the parents by repeating the nice words of Al-Hassan Al-Basri, "*May the newborn baby, for whom you must thank the Donor (Allah), be blessed. May he (she) grow up and obey you.*"

Filled with joy and mercy, parents hasten to implant aesthetic values into the minds and hearts of their children and familiarize them with tasting beauty and its sensible and spiritual sides with the first moments in their life. Let's read the details.



### **1- Spiritual beauty (Emotional)**

Abu Dawoud and At-Termidhi narrated through an accurate way that Abi Rafi', may Allah Be Pleased with him, said, "I saw the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saying *al-adhaan* (the call announcing the prayer time) in the ears of Al-Hussein bin 'Ali when Fataima gave birth to him." Al-Baihaqie narrated in *Al-Sho'ab*, about Al-Hassan bin 'Ali that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "*He who gets a baby and then says al-atha'an in his right ear and says al-iqaama (the call announcing the performance of prayers) in his left ear, the baby will be saved from Om Al-Sobian (a disease befalling children).*"

Commenting, *Imam Ibnul-Qayyim Al-Jawziyya*, "The aim of saying *al-adhan*, Allah only Knows, is to make this *adhan* that expresses Allah's Greatness and Haughtiness and contains the testimonial and slogan of Islam, the first thing to enter his (her)



ears just as the word of *at-tawheed* (monotheism) is the last word pronounced by a Muslim when he dies."

He then adds, "It is not far-fetched that the effect of *al-adhaan* reaches a baby's heart, though he (she) does not feel it. Another benefit (for saying *al-adhaan*) is that the Devil, who has been waiting for the coming of the baby to suffer in this world that Allah ordains him (her) to live in, flees when he hears the words of *al-adhaan* that tease and weaken him. A third benefit is that *al-adhan's* call for Allah, His religion and His worshiping precedes the Devil's call, just as man's nature created by Allah precedes the alternation made by the Devil in it. There are still other benefits that we have not realized yet.

## **2- Physical beauty (Sensible)**

Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated that 'A'isha, may Allah Be Pleased with her, said, "Asma'a bint Abi Bakr emigrated (to Al-Madeenah) while she was pregnant with Abdellah bin Al-Zobier. When she came to Qiba'a (a place in Al-Madeenah), she gave birth to her child, then brought him to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) who put him in his lap. We, said 'A'isha, looked for a date for a while, then we managed to find one. The Prophet (PBUH) chewed the date in his mouth, then put it in the child's mouth.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus the first thing to enter the child's stomach was the saliva of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). Next, Asma'a said, he passed his hands on his body, wished him good and named him

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1- This process in which a chewed date is moved right and left inside the mouth of a newborn baby is called al-tahneek. A date may be replaced by any sugary matter. This has proved to be a Prophetic medical miracle as physicians have come to the conclusion that newborn babies and infants are exposed to death if the quantity of sugar decreases in blood.

Abdallah."In the Two *Sahihs* (Al-Bukhari and Muslim), Abu Bordah narrated that Aba Musa said, "I brought a newborn baby to the Prophet (PBUH) who named him Ibraheem and chewed a date and put it in his mouth."Al-Bukhari adds, "and wished he would be blessed and gave it to me."Muslim narrated in his Sahih that 'A'isha, may Allah Be Pleased with her, said, "People used to bring their young children to the Prophet (PBUH) to invoke blessings on them and put dates that he chewed in his mouth, in their own mouths. When, once a young child made water on him, he asked for water and cleaned his clothes."

Hence, we find that Islam is keen that children taste beauty at their first moments in life. The aim is to make them love beauty and attach to it in a manner that they take it as a symbol and adhere to its values.

## Festival of Beauty

Islam celebrates the coming of a newborn baby through holding a festival of beauty in which relatives, neighbours and friends happily and joyfully participate. At-Termidhi narrated via accurate sources that Samra, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "*A child should have an aqeeqa (a sheep slaughtered for him/her) and be named and his hair should be cut when he is seven days old.*" At-Termidhi also narrated via accurate sources, that 'Amro ibn Shoraiyh, relating about his father and his grandfather, said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) ordered that a child be named and cleaned and (a) sheep be slaughtered for him (her) on his seventh day."



Thus, this festival is made when a newborn baby is seven days old. The participants are relatives, neighbours and friends, in addition to poor and needy people. The honourable guest is the newborn baby. The sections of this festival programme are: cleaning the baby, giving alms for his (her) sake, naming him and slaying (a) sheep for him. Such sections guarantee that all people present will taste beauty starting with the newborn baby,

then his relatives, neighbours and friends and ending with poor and needy people.

### **1- Cleaning the child up**

Al-Hakim narrated in his *Mostadrak* in an accurate way through *Al-Shaykhan* that Borieda, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said, "When we were bestowed with a newborn baby in the Pre-Islamic Paganism, we used to slaughter a sheep for him, remove his hair and paint his head with saffron." Abu Ya'la and Al-Bazzar narrated through honest men that 'A'isha, may Allah be Pleased with her, said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) slaughtered two sheep for Al-Hassan and another two for Al-Hussein when they are seven days old. He then ordered that they would be cleaned and said: slay in their names and say: *In the Name of Allah. Allah Is Great. From You and to You. This is al-aqeeqa of so and so.* They, 'A'isha said, used to put a piece of cotton into the blood of *al-aqeeqa* then put it on the newborn baby's head in the Pagan ages. But the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) ordered that a kind of perfume be put instead of the blood."

The aim of removing newborn baby's hair is to add strength to him, opens head pores and enhances the senses of sight, smelling and hearing.

A baby feels beauty when he has his hair removed. Modern physiological studies have proved that there are many sense cells in man's skin. They receive certain types of sensations; some of them feel through heat, some through coldness, some through touching and pressing and some through pain.

## 2- Giving value of baby's hair as alms

Ibn Ishaq states that Abdullah bin Abi Bakr narrated that Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Al-Hussein, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) slaughtered a sheep for Al-Hassan as *aqeeqa* and asked Fataima to remove his hair and give the value of the hair as alms according to silver price. It was found to be worth one *dirham* or part of it." *Imam* Malik narrated that Ga'far bin Muhammad relates that his father said, "Fataima, may Allah Be Pleased with her, weighed the hair of Al-Hassan, Al-Hussein, Zienab and Om Kolthoom and gave the value as alms." Yahia bin Bakeer narrated that Anas bin Malik, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) ordered that the hair of Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein be removed when they were seven days old and gave the value of the hair as alms, according to silver price."

Commenting, Sheikh Ad-Dahlawi, may Allah Put mercy on him, says, "The reason behind giving the value of hair as alms according to silver price is to thank Allah for the blessing of transferring a baby from the embryonic stage to the babyhood stage. The best way of appreciating this blessing is to give the value of his hair as alms since embryo's hair represents a remainder of the embryonic life and removing it is a sign of a new independent life. Silver is assigned for fixing the amount of money to be given as alms because gold is more expensive and available only to the rich. Most other things are not suitable for fixing the value of baby's hair." This is one of the beauty springs which are tasted by relatives and friends with the aim of thanking the Donor (Allah) and of which poor and needy people take big quantities, feeling that they are brothers to the baby's family.

### 3- Naming the baby

Sensing beauty and being interested in obtaining it should extend to names. Abu Dawoud narrated that Abu Ad-Darda'a, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "*You are called with your names and your fathers' names on the Day of Judgement. So, select the best of names.*"

Thanks to his supreme wisdom, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) realized the importance of a name in forming the self-concept. A good nice name is one of the factors that shape a good concept of one's self. The Prophet (PBUH) hated ugly names and changed them into good ones. Al-Bukhari narrated that Sa'eed bin Al-Mossieb relates that his grandfather came to the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) who asked him, "what is your name? He answered: *Hazan* (difficult). The Prophet (PBUH) then said: You are *Sahl* (easy)." *Imam* Muslim narrated that Ibn 'Umar said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) changed a girl's name from Aassia (a disobedient female) to Jameela (beautiful). The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) changed the name of Shihab (a shooting star) to Hisham (one of lion's names); Harb (war) to Silm (peace) and Al-Motaji' (lying down) to Al-Monba'ith (diligent). He also changed the names of Al-Aas (a disobedient man), Shaytan (a devil) and Ghorab (a crow). Commenting, Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya, may Allah Put mercy on him, says, "This is an astonishing section in the religion; that is to change bad despicable names into good favourable ones."

The best names are those of pious people including Prophets, Messengers and good followers. Sheikh Ad-Dahlawi, may Allah Put mercy on him, says, "You should learn that one of the greatest aims of religion is to add praise of Allah to the

indispensables that accompany a Muslim throughout his life for the sake of reminding people of the path of Allah. Names containing praise of Allah thus call for monotheism. Arabs and others used to name their children after their gods. When the Prophet (PBUH) was dispatched to establish the pillars of monotheism, Muslim children should have been named within the context of this pure monotheism. The two names of Abdullah and Abdur-Rahman are the most favourable among those names in which man is added to His Lord because they are the most famous and cannot be added to any one except Allah. Naming newborn babies Muhammad and Ahmad is also desirable since such names indicate that their bearers belong to this cherished religion, just as many people like to name their children after their great forefathers."

The good choice of names is not a deluxe job but a religious duty and an oriented educational activity. Az-Zobier ibnul-'Awwam, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said, "Talha binu 'Ubiedallah At-Tiemi names his children after some Prophets, having learned that there will be no prophet after Muhammad (PBUH). I name my children for martyrs in the hope that they may join them". Thus we find some of Al-Zobier's children were named as follows: Abdullah after Abdullah bin Jahsh, a martyr in the battle of Uhud; Hamza after Hamza bin Abdul-Mottalib, a martyr in Uhud too; Ga'far after Ga'far bin Abi Talib, a martyr in the battle of Mo'ta and Obieda after Obieda bin Al-Harith, a martyr in the battle of Badr. When naming his children, Talha bin Obiedallah may have followed his beloved example, Muhammad (PBUH). Muslim and Abu Dawoud narrated that Anas, may Allah Be Pleased with him,

relates that the Prophet (PBUH) said, *"I have begotten a baby boy tonight and I named him after forefather Ibraheem."*

When a child bears the name of a great man (a Prophet, a Companion, a follower or a pious person) and gets acquainted with his biography and life stages, he may follow him in all his activities, draw on his nobility and wisdom and benefit from his faith, *jihad*, knowledge and morality.

#### **4-Slaughtering sheep for him (aqeeqa)**

Al-Bukhari narrated that Solieman bin Ammar Al-Dabbie relates that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, *"Every baby should have an aqeeqa. So, slaughter (sheep) for him and clean him up."* Imam Ahmad and At-Termidhi narrated that " 'A'isha, may Allah Be Pleased with her, relates that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, *"Two equal sheep should be slaughtered for a newborn boy and one sheep for a newborn girl."* Our good forefathers were so interested in *al-aqeeqa* that one might slaughter a sparrow if they did not have money to buy sheep. Imam Malik narrated in his *Mowat'* (chapter of *aqeeqa*) that Muhammad bin Ibraheem bin Al-Harith At-Tiemi said, "Once I heard my father speak favourably of *al-aqeeqa* even if a sparrow is slaughtered to the baby." One of the reasons behind interest in *al-aqeeqa* may be found in the tradition narrated by At-Termidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Maga and related by Al-Hassan bin Samra: The Prophet (PBUH) said, *"Parents are bound to have an aqeeqa slaughtered for their newborn baby when he (she) is seven days old. They also should cut his hair and name him on that day."*

Imam Al-Khatabi says, "Imam Ahmad bin Hanbel explained that the expression 'are bound to' here is related to intercession



(on the Day of Judgement). He means that if a child dies before his parents make an *aqeeqa* for him, he is not going to mediate for them. *Imam* Malik says about *aqeeqa*, "It is desirable, not obligatory, that a parent makes an *aqeeqa* for his child by slaughtering a sheep. It is a common practice and an act of sacrifice and devotion. An *aqeeqa* (sheep) must not be one-eyed; neither its meat nor its skin is allowed to be sold; and its bones must not be broken. A baby's family can eat from an *aqeeqa* and give part of it as alms but should not put some of its blood on the baby's body."

*Aqeeqa* thus radiates beauty too. Parents imagine that they sacrifice their children for the sake of Allah just as Prophet Ibraheem did. This teaches a man to be benevolent and satisfied with the Will of Allah. Moreover, when the baby's big family gather to eat from his (her) *aqeeqa*, they come closer to each other and feel happy with the newborn baby whom they wish the best of luck. In this *aqeeqa*, poor people also feel the meanings of brotherhood and solidarity when they are given alms and gifts.

Thus, such festival that has several sections (cleaning the baby up, giving alms for his sake, naming him and making an *aqeeqa* for him) is a real festival of beauty in which relatives, friends, poor people take part. All participants feel happy and joyful since the newborn baby at his early hours tastes beauty, makes them taste it and helps them to adhere to morality and good manners.

## In Big Mosque ...

### Children Are Raised

When mosques enjoy their due status for which they are built according to the Will of Allah, they become one of the greatest educational effects on the spirits of children. When children see straight people gather in mosques for the sake of Allah, they grow to feel the importance of the Muslim society and cherish the Islamic group. Hence, taking children to the mosque by their fathers is a desirable custom and a good educational method aimed at making children frequent mosques, love prayers and look forward to the company of pious people. Moreover, When children leave their home and go to the mosque, they feel pleased and joyful under parents' care and protection.



So, we find the Messenger (PBUH) accompany children to the mosque. *Imams* An-Nasa'i, Ahmad and Al-Hakim narrated through an accurate way the following tradition: "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) once came to us at the prayers of *al-maghrib* (sunset) or may be *al-isha'* (evening) while carrying Al-Hassan or Al-Hussein. He proceeded and put him, then said

'Allah is Great' to enter the prayers. While praying, he prostrated himself for a long time. The relator said: I raised my head to see the boy lying on the Prophet's back while prostrating, then I returned again to prostration. When the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) finished prayers, people said: Oh, Messenger of Allah, you prostrated for a long time during the prayers to the extent that we thought that a bad thing happened or some revelations were coming down. The Prophet (PBUH) said: *None of these occurred, but my grandson climbed on my back and I hated to spoil his enjoyment.*"

In the era of the Prophet (PBUH), the mosque was a home for children, where they found care, love and tolerance on the part of adults. They graduated from the mosque as pure masters and good mannered strugglers. Jaber bin Samra, may Allah Be Pleased with him, relates his memoirs about the mosque as narrated by *Imam* Muslim. Jaber said, "Once I prayed *al-thohr* (afternoon prayers) with the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), then he went out and headed for home and I followed him. Next, he met two boys and stroked their cheeks one by one. When he then stroked my cheek, I found his hand cool with nice scent as if he were at a perfumery."

It is to be mentioned here that a child is allowed to go to the mosque only when he is able to go to the toilet and clean himself up and when he learns the mosque decencies such as entering calmly, putting the shoes at the their place in the mosque and holding them with a heel against a heel while walking, not running inside the mosque, not crowding adults, paying attention to Friday sermons, religious lessons, concentration while praying and not damaging things. *Imam* Malik, may Allah Be

Pleased with him, was asked if it is desirable for a man to take his son to the mosque. His answer was as follows, "There is no problem if he learns decencies and understand them and if he does not damage things. But it is not favourable if he damages things and does not stay calmly in the mosque."



The first thing that influences a child when he comes to the mosque is the collective *salat* (prayer). *Salat* is in fact a media school that implants supreme ethics and great values in the spirits of those adhering to it. It gathers people for the sake of a holy goal and teach them punctuality through performing five prayers a day at certain times as mentioned in the glorious verse, ﴿Believers are ordered to perform salat at definite times﴾ (Al-Nissa': Women 103). The element of place should be stressed here as Muslims gather for prayer in a certain place, the mosque. However, any pure place on earth can be called a mosque as mentioned in the tradition narrated by Al-Bukhari, "*The earth was made a pure mosque for me (the Prophet)*". This collective prayer has more than one level. Daily prayers comprise the people of a certain district whereas the people of a village or a town gather for Friday prayers in the main big mosque. Larger numbers of people gather in *al-aid* (feast) prayers as well as those of *al-istisqa'* (asking Allah for the fall of rain) and eclipse. This is why the collective prayer has a great status in Islam, in addition to its several religious and social lessons.

There is still an aesthetic lesson taught by children through prayers, namely 'standing in regular rows'. *Imam* Muslim narrated that Abu Mas'oud, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to make our shoulders touch one another in prayers and say, "*Stand right and don't argue so that your hearts may not be disturbed. Adult men should stand behind me (in the first rows), followed by the younger ones.*" Ahmad narrated that Abdullah bin Ghanem relates that Abu Malik Al-Ash'ari, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to stand for an equal time and recite the same amount of Qur'an in the four *rak'as* (units that form a prayer like *al-isha'a*; a *rak'a* or a unit starts with standing, then kneeling, then standing for a short time, then prostrating twice). However, he made the first *rak'a* the longest in order that the people might get more faith. He also used to place men behind him in front of children who are followed by women."



When a child stands behind men, he learns how to respect adults. He also learns that the real man is the one who stands in the first row in the mosque, not outside it. So, he wishes to grow up quickly to move to the first rows in the Presence of Allah, Glory be to Him.

Moreover, a child learns how to stand in regular rows with his young peers and form his first relations and friendships in

the mosque. It is really a nice start for a long friendship relating to mosques, not to streets and associated with the brotherhood of faith, not with that of greed and lust.

Another thing affecting a child when he comes to the mosque is 'the circles of knowledge and praise of Allah'. In such circles, a child acquires a lot of knowledge at the hands of scholars, shares praise of Allah with others and gets acquainted with the meanings of love and modesty. Hence, he recognizes the pleasures of praising Allah, the status of knowledge, the rights of scholars and the greatness of the mosque.

So, the Companions were keen to take their children to the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) to stand in circles of knowledge before the greatest educator, Muhammad (PBUH). It was not a wonder to see in such circles a child climbing his father's back, sits in his lap or touches his beard with his tender fingers. An-Nasa'i narrated through an accurate way that, "A man with a little child used to attend some of the Prophet's meetings with his Companions. The child used to climb the back of the Prophet (PBUH) who seated him in his lap. Then, the child died and his father stopped going to the Prophet's lessons due his son's death. When the Prophet (PBUH) missed the man, he said: *Why don't I see so and so?* They (the Companions) answered, Oh, Messenger of Allah. His child that you used to see has died. Next, the Prophet (PBUH) met the man and asked him about his son. The man told him that his son had died. The Prophet (PBUH) consoled him and said: *Oh, so and so. Which is more favourable to you? To enjoy your son the rest of your life or to find him at every gate of Paradise to open them to you?* The man replied: Oh, Prophet of Allah. It is better and more favourable to

me that my son precedes me to the gates of Paradise to open them for me. The Prophet (PBUH) said: *You will get that.*"

In a nutshell, these pearls of beauty and many others will not be taught by children except in mosques. If we really want the interest of our children, the honour of our nation, the restoration of our glories and the welfare of our countries and the happiness in this life and the hereafter, we, together with our children, must go back to mosques to get more faith and morality. The mosque that graduated the children of the Companions and the good forefathers is able to graduate the likes of them in case parents direct their children to the mosque through persuasion, love and encouragement, not through mere force, blame and frustration. This will also come true if adults are aware of their role toward the children coming to the mosque. Adults must advise and guide children tenderly, gently and humbly. They must treat them in a loving and amicable way in order to attract them to the mosque to perform prayers and attend lessons regularly.

Thus, the mosque becomes a real educational incubator in which little children are raised and educated.

## Joy, Entertainment and Education on Feast

On the day of *Eid* (Feast), mouths are given sweets to pronounce sweet words and people exchange expressions of congratulation and wishing good and forget their worldly disputes for the sake pleasing Allah. On that day, a man feels happy, looking forward to boosting his ties with relative and friendship with people as a whole. He is delighted with the world around him and sees all things decorated with beauty.



On *al- eid*, we see children in their new coloured clothes in the form of a rainbow. They seem as if they are a new single garment. These little magicians who convert their few pennies into a valuable treasure and transfer the feast day to a very short one get ready for playing with the early hours of dawn and involve themselves in amusements till the sunset.

If you look earnestly to the feast and its rites and decencies, you will realize that it is a big school that lasts for a short time and teaches both children and adults various types of beauty: physical, moral, behavioural or spiritual.



Within the context of physical beauty, Ibnul-Qayyim says, "The Prophet (PBUH) used to wear the best of clothes for prayers and he had a special garment for the two feasts and Friday prayers." Moreover, Al-Hakim narrated that Al-Hassan, may Allah Be Pleased with him, said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) ordered us to be dressed in the best clothes we have and wear the best perfume we can get and offer the most precious sacrifices (for the sake of Allah) we can buy." Islam also calls on us to clean ourselves up and wash. Some scholars make it desirable to wash on the two feasts as many Companions were proved to do that.

When physical beauty becomes complete with (washing-wearing the best clothes and putting on perfume) it has a big psychological effect on children as it makes them joyful, delighted and happy. At that time they see beauty in every thing around them. Gordon Baryon stresses the effect of the physical beauty when he says, "Good appearance grants you self respect, confidence and assurance. If you want evidence that indicates that clothes affect personality, try this recipe. When you feel disappointed one day, have a hot bath and clean yourself up carefully (washing), then wear clean clothes and smart yourself up. Next, make your room tidy and arrange its furniture as if you are going to receive some prominent people. Then, relax in a comfortable armchair. You will be amazed when you feel the difference in your mood."

Physical beauty on the feast day does not stop at this point, but it extents to permissible amusement, innocent playing and sweet singing legalized by Islam on such a day. An-Nassa'i and Ibn Habban narrated through an accurate way that Anas, may

Allah Be Pleased with him, said: The Prophet (PBUH) came to Al-Madeenah and its people had two days as feasts in which they amuse themselves. He said, "Allah, glory be to him, compensated you with two other better days, those of *fitr* (lesser feast) and *adha* (greater feast)." Ahmad and Al-Shaykhan narrated that 'A'isha, may Allah Be Pleased with her, said, "Some Abyssinians played at the house of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) on a feast day. I looked at them over his shoulders while he was lowering them to get me a better view till I was satisfied and left."

On the feast day, you find all people, young and old, play according to heavenly legislation. This is considered an example of rare beauty as the whole society at such hours lives the pure and clear joys of childhood. When children see this scene, they become more delighted since they feel that all society members share their interests represented in playing. Thus, they feel more secure and high-spirited.



As to moral and behavioural beauty, you can find it in Islam's keenness that all people, young and old, women and children, go out to participate in the prayers of *al-eid* (feast) in the open. Al-Bukhari narrated that Om Attiya Al-Ansariya, may Allah Be Pleased with her, said, "We were ordered to let young girls as well as women go out (for the feast prayers) while menstruating women are kept away from the prayer place." Ibn Majah and Al-Baihaqie narrated that Ibn 'Abbas, may Allah Be Pleased

with him and his father, said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to let his women and daughters go out on the two feasts."

As children have a special place in such a blessed gathering, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to accompany them for prayers in the open. Ibn Khoziemah narrated in his *Sahih* that



Abdullah bin 'Umar, may Allah Be Pleased with him and his father, said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to go out on the two feasts with Al-Fadl bin Al-'Abbas, Abdullah bin 'Abbas, Al-'Abbas, 'Ali, Ga'far, Al-Hassan, Al-Hussein, Usama bin Zayd and Ayman bin Om Ayman and raises his voice, saying, 'There is no god but Allah' and 'Allah Is Great'. He walks in the road of goldsmiths when he goes to the prayer place, while taking the road of shoemakers when he comes home."

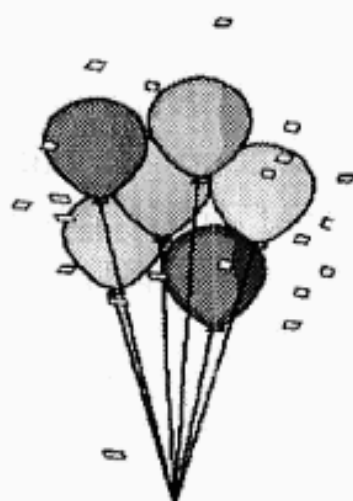
When a child goes out of the prayer place and sees Muslims around him, he feels that he loves them and that they are strong and mighty. This way, he is raised in a manner that combines him with other Muslims on sound and faithful bases. Being self-confident, he does not obey the society blindly and does not follow the masses haphazardly. Such acts of worship a child performs together with his Muslim brothers grants him the pleasure of feeling that Muslims are powerful and have common emotions.

As to spiritual and moral beauty, you can see it clearly in the prayer place in the open, where the first thing that attracts

children and has their ears when entering the prayer place is a great angelic voice of faith, namely the voice of *takbeer* 'saying Allah Is Great'. *Takbeer* is desirable on the two feasts as Allah says about *eidul-fitr*, ﴿ Complete (the fasting) of Ramadan days and say 'Allah Is Great' as He guided you. You are now expected to thank Him for that ﴾ As to *eid al-adha*, Allah says, ﴿ Praise Allah on several days ﴾ Ibn 'Abbas says that they are the days of *tashreeq* (the four days of the bigger *eid* or feast).

This angelic chant continues going up into space to join the earth with the heaven and leaves its deep effect on a child's soul. It converts such innocent soul into a spring of good and benevolence.

Afterwards, a child sees a wonderful and solemn scene. The worshippers stand in rows in preparation for the prayers that start with *takbeer* and end in *tasleem* (saying peace, mercy and blessings upon you). Then, the people's hearts begin to exchange plenty of love, mercy and peace with each other in a manner that they congratulate each other with these nice words: "May Allah Accept (good deeds) from you and from us". It was narrated that Jobier said, "The Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) used to say to one another: "May Allah Accept (good deeds) from you and from us" when they met on the day of *eid* (feast).



When children see this luminous picture, they feel that a kind of beauty, pleasure and psychological comfort passes through

their bodies. They live the beauty of such moments for the rest of the feast day, visiting relatives and dear companions and playing with friends; they even enjoy these moments for a while after the feast.

Thus, the feasts of Muslims are filled with joy and entertainment in addition to education in a context of beauty.



**Part Two**

**Practical Means  
for Islamic Education**





## Introduction

Allah says, ﴿(Oh, People) act and Allah, His Messenger and the Believers will witness your acts. You will be returned to Whom He Knows the visible and invisible (worlds). He then will inform you of what you have done.﴾ (At-Tawbah:105)

Islam incorporates both belief and deeds. It is the way of life for mankind which satisfies and suits his nature and cannot be satisfied with mere feelings and intentions unless they are transformed into practical activity. Good intentions are the base of good actions but by themselves, they are not sufficient for judgement and requital. Intentions are added to deeds and determine their value. This is the meaning of the Prophetic tradition, "*Deeds depend on intentions.*"

Hence, Sheikh Al-Banna says, "The deeds I mean here are the fruit of knowledge and faithfulness, "*(Oh, People) act and Allah, His Messenger and the Believers will witness your acts.*"



He then states that a sincere brother must form a (real) Muslim home as it is one of the greatest good deeds that can be performed. Al-Banna added that a man should persuade his family to

respect his methodology and observe the boundaries of Islam in all aspects of family life. After having chosen a good wife, a brother must explain to his wife her rights and duties towards her husband and he must raise his children and servants, if any, on the principles of Islam.

We are going to concentrate on practical means since words alone are not enough. This was acknowledged by Yahia ibn Mu'az, (may Allah have mercy on him) who says, "Good words are good words. The meaning of good words is better than their mere utterance. The application of good words is better than their meaning."

### **Oh, good father and kind mother...**

let's work together for the sake of achieving a truly Islamic education, praying that Allah May Help us, then seeking the help of practical means. This process requires faithful intentions and emotions, sincere supplication for Allah's assistance, determination and resolution. We can never achieve an Islamic education unless we adhere to these pillars that whenever obtained and maintained, difficulties and hardships will surely be overcome. At that time, one can implant the seeds of piety in the spirits of his children and discover their springs of goodness. Through stable and effective steps we can once again bring the nation to its previous honour and glory as the poet Iqbaal says, "The resolve of free people brings life to the dead and the piety of good people brings life to nations."

It is said that the one, who utters a piece of wisdom and the one, who listens to it are partners. However, in the end it belongs to the one who applies it. So, adhere to it practicality and begin by reforming yourself so that your young children

may be reformed. Let's listen to this piece of advice given by *Imam* Ash-Shafi'i to the educator of Harunu Ar-Rasheed's children. He said:

"The first step you should take to reform the children of the Amir of Believers is to reform your self, as their eyes follow you closely. What you see as good is also seen by them and what you see as bad is viewed likewise by them."



# Chapter One

## A Garden of Tales

Telling stories is something that has accompanied man since his early existence on earth or even before he came down from heaven. What happened to Prophet Adam (PBUH) in heaven is considered a story where the hero was the first man created by Allah to inhabit and rule the earth as indicated by the Glorious Qur'an. The first story witnessed by the earth was that of Qabeel and Habeel (Adam's sons). So, stories are as ancient as man because they are the outcome of incidents and the result of human interaction and his interaction with nature; with its earth, sky, plains, mountains, seas...etc.



As man finds great enjoyment and attraction in reading and listening to stories for their charm, effect and goals, the Glorious Qur'an uses them as a means of guiding man to righteousness, justice and the straight path. Allah says, ﴿Tell (them) stories so that they may think.﴾ (Al-A'raaf: 167)

Qur'anic narrative has its significant effects on the body, mind and spirit of man. The Qur'an uses stories in places, particularly when discussing the Messengers' news with their people. Allah honored his Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH) by telling him the best stories for the sake of preaching and advising people and giving him more resolve and determination. Allah Says, ﴿We Relate the best stories to you in this revealed Qur'an.﴾ (Yusuf: 3) and He also Says.﴿We Relate the news of each Messenger to you so that your heart will be more assured.﴾ (Hood: 120).

When we ponder on the splendor of the Prophetic *Sira* (biography), we notice plenty of stories related by the Prophet (PBUH) related to his Companions, both young and old, to guide them and their successors till the Last Day. We find the story of "A man infected with favus, a leper and a blind man" narrated by *Ash-Shaiykh*; "Prophet Ibraheem, Prophet Ismaeel, and his mother" and "He who borrowed one thousand dinars" narrated by Al-Bukhari; "The boy of the grove," narrated by Muslim and "Dhul-Kifl (a pious man mentioned in the Qur'an)" narrated by At-Tirmidhi.

It is to be noted that Prophetic stories are based on actual events that occurred during early times and have nothing to do with myths and legends, which are the fruit of fanciful imagination. These real tales of life make children trust this history as it is taught to them and teaches them how to be positive and adventurous.

Relying on this perfect methodology of faith and education, the Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) proceeded to direct and guide others and discover their springs of goodness and

benevolence and eliminate their weakness and corruption through wonderful, meaningful narrative. It was stated that the first one who told stories in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was Tameem Ad-Dari, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), who used to relate stories following the Friday prayers, after he had taken permission from Umar, (may Allah Be Pleased with him). While holding the office of caliph, Uthmanu ibn 'Affan, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), allowed Tameem to relate stories twice a week instead of once time only. At one time, during his rule, Ali, (may Allah Be Pleased with him) entered the mosque of Basra to listen to its narrator. When he approached the circle of Al-Hassanul-Basri, he was pleased with the narrator and let him continue telling stories and prevented other narrators. In the era of Mu'awiya, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), stories were told more often and enjoyed by the public. Al-Mas'udi narrated that Mu'awiya used to spend one third of the night getting acquainted with the news and daily life of the Arabs as well as the policies of foreign countries toward their people.



One may ask here: What is the reason behind this great interest in stories? Isn't it a waste of time? We may answer: Think again my friend!. The news of former, practical scholars and pious people is one of the best ways that implant virtues into the spirit of man and help them endure hardships for the sake of noble goals and great objectives. Such news encourages people

to take those who sacrificed and remained determined in the path of Allah, as good examples for the sake of achieving supreme ambitions and an honorable status in front of Allah, the Almighty. Hence, some early scholars say that relating stories are some of Allah's soldiers through which He Assures the hearts of His righteous slaves. You can find the evidence in the Book of Allah, Glory to Him. He Says, ﴿ *We Relate the news of each Messenger to you so that your heart will be more assured. The news coming in this surah is true and aimed at preaching and reminding the believers.* ﴾ (Hood: 'a Prophet' 120). Imam Abu Haneefa, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), says, "I prefer listening to the tales of scholars and their good qualities more than involving in matters of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) as these tales represent the decencies of those people. You can find the evidence in the Book of Allah. He says, ﴿ *Those are the very people guided by Allah; Follow them then.* ﴾ (Al-An'aam: 90). He also says, ﴿ *In their stories, there have been lessons for those gifted with understanding hearts.* ﴾ (Yusuf: 121).

Such stories are so important to children as they inculcate values and principles in their minds and develop the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of their personalities. A child imagines that he is the hero of the real story he listens to. So, he is liberated from the restrictions of his reality and moves to a larger and more comprehensive world in which he lives with Prophets, leaders and princes. Moreover, when he lives in the atmosphere of Prophetic narrative, he feels that he is attending Prophetic meetings and is actually witnessing its incidents.

A truly comprehensive, integrated system of education is based on true belief, faith and wisdom. The role of telling stories



is effective in conveying vital moral principles to young minds that are naturally attracted to their various ideas, fancies and events.. Stories also arouse a child's interests and make him able to differentiate between good and evil and between right and wrong while teaching him to incline to what is right. They also increase his vocabulary, enhance his language skills and literary taste, boost his knowledge of the past and the present, and help him to look forward to the future with knowledge and a positive attitude because he knows that Allah is in control of all things.. It is worth mentioning that a child's evaluation of human nature and beauty with all its supreme principles and aesthetic values, is developed through religious, social and moral narrative.



Now we can say that just as a child cannot live without water, air and food, he is in great need of faith, morals and virtues through suitable and beautiful narrative. It is the right of children that their parents use stories and tales in a positive way to enable them to educate their children in an atmosphere filled with faith and wisdom. But What should parents relate to their children? And how do they relate it?

- What are the best times for relating stories?

This is what we are going to learn in detail, *insha'a* Allah.

## What Should We Relate for Our Children?

We want to raise a generation that resorts to faith, religion and Allah's teachings; a generation that imitates the morals of the angels, lives on earth while looking forward to the Hereafter, and relies on Allah's guidance in all aspects of life. So, we need a



special kind of good and effective tales and stories that speak about gaining Allah's pleasure and take the Qur'an and faith as sources of inspiration. We want the kind of tales that help us educate our children and lead them safely through life in an age full of desires, and confusing orientations but void of good and pious examples. We cannot find this kind except in the following:

### **The best stories**

Allah Says, ﴿ *We Relate the best stories to you in this revealed Qur'an.* ﴾ (Yusuf: 3) Explaining the reason behind this revelation, Ibn Jareer narrated that Ibn 'Abbass related, "They (the Companions) said: Oh, Messenger of Allah, would you tell us some stories? Then the verse of "*We Relate the best stories to*

*you"was revealed. They wanted mere stories but he brought them the best ones."*

When we ponder on the best stories (those of the Glorious Qur'an) we find that they are characterized by supremacy of goals and aims. They contain chapters about morality that aim at teaching good manners and spreading wisdom and decency. They also include many ways of education and cultivation that are explained through dialogue or pieces of advice and wisdom and via promising rewards or threats. They also contain many parts of the history of Messengers with their countrymen and rulers with their people. Furthermore, they tell us about the news of good people, who controlled the earth because of their piety, and evil people who lost their privileges and were punished and were made an example for others because they strayed from the right path. All these stories are related by Allah, the Almighty through clear speech, wise method, selected words and a wonderful, fascinating approach to show people good manners and real faith and guide them to useful knowledge via the best means of persuasion. These stories are also mentioned by Allah to be a model for Muslims in education and guidance.

### **Biography of the Master of the Messengers**

Allah Says, ﴿ *Oh, Prophet. We Sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and frightening ones, a preacher for the Cause of Allah according to His Own Will, and a shining light.* ﴾ (Al-Ahzaab: 45-46)

Since ancient times, people have been fond of talking about their great leaders and pioneers. The greater the status of these men, the more their followers love them and are interested in their biographies and good deeds. However, there is a big

difference when you talk about the best man and the best Messenger and when you talk about a great or prominent man for a certain group of people. Since the early years of Islam, people have been longing to know about the blessed Prophetic biography and *al-ghazawat* (the battles) in particular. As days pass, people become more enthusiastic to know about the Prophet's life because it represents the record of the perfect man, the greatest ideal and the best example as Allah says, ﴿ *You have found a good example in the Messenger of Allah in case you want the satisfaction of Allah and look forward to the Last day, and praise Allah so often.* ﴾ (Al-Ahzaab: 21)

Our age is characterized by corruption and indecency, and badly needs to take the Messenger (PBUH) as a model. More than being desirable, this is obligatory as the Glorious Qur'an teaches us that the Mercy of Allah will be the recompense of those who



follow the Messenger (PBUH) Allah says, ﴿ *My Mercy has extended to everything. I will allocate it to the pious people who give due alms and believe in Our verses; who follow the illiterate Messenger and Prophet...* ﴾ (Al-A'raaf: 156-157)

So, the Companions were keen to instill the love of the Messenger of Allah into the hearts of their children through this blessed biography and these blessed Prophetic *ghazawat* (battles). Sa'adu ibn Abi Waqqas, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), said, "We used to teach our children *al-ghazawat* of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) just as we taught them the Qur'anic

*suras* (chapters)."Isma'eel bin Muhammad bin Sa'adu ibn Abi Waqqas, (may Allah Be Pleased with him and his father), said, "Our father used to tell us about *al-ghazawat* and companies (of war) and say: 'Oh, children. These represent the honor of your forefathers. So, don't waste them by not learning them by heart or memorizing them."Zeinul-'Abideen ibnul-Hussein ibn Ali, (may Allah Be Pleased with them), said, "We were taught *al-ghazawat* of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) equally as we were taught the Qur'anic *suras* (chapters)."

There is no doubt that one of the most important reasons that urged our pious predecessors to be most careful to teach their children *al-ghazawat* of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) was their knowledge that "a lover is fond of imitating his beloved."Allah, Glory to Him, sent our beloved, Muhammad (PBUH) to save us from the plague of darkness and enlighten us with the radiance of Islam and ordered us to love and follow him. If we really love the Prophet (PBUH), we will love his qualities that have shown us the right path. He is modest, lenient with the believers, benevolent to the poor, faithful, honest and tolerant. He keeps his promises and spends money for the sake of Allah. We must lovingly adhere to his virtues and translate them into reality through our practical conduct.

### **Stories of outstanding pious people**

Allah Says, ﴿ *And the early people who believed first, including Almuhajireen (immigrants) and Alansaar (supporters), as well as those who gratefully followed them; Allah was pleased with them and they are satisfied with Him. Moreover, He prepared for them paradise through which rivers pass. They will live therein forever. This is the greatest achievement* ﴾ (At-Tawbah: 100)

Ata'a says that Ibn 'Abbass, (may Allah Be Pleased with them), explained this part of the verse: ﴿....as well as those who gratefully followed them﴾ to this effect: 'They (the followers) pray that the Almuhajireen and Alansaar be granted mercies and enter Paradise. They also mention their good qualities.' In another narration, he gave this explanation: 'Those who gratefully follow them... adhere to the same religion till the Day of Judgement. If you consider these two opinions in regard to 'gratefully following Almuhajireen and Alansaar,' you will realize that both of them denote the mentioning of their merits, pleasure when talking about them, longing to meet them, and taking them as a role model.'

Hence, we are ordered to raise our children according to the good qualities and deeds of Almuhajireen and Alansaar through learning about their lives, drawing on their heroism and following in their footsteps. This should be taken for granted as Abu Nu'aym narrated in Al-Hulia (Ornament ) that Ibn Mas'oud said, "Allah looked at the slaves' hearts and selected Muhammad (PBUH) for His Message and chose him to learn His knowledge. Then, He looked at the people's hearts and selected companions for him and made them supporters of His religion and ministers of His Prophet (PBUH). So, what is seen by the believers as good, it is actually good; and what is seen by the believers as bad, it is such for Allah." Abu Nu'aym also narrated that Abdullah ibn 'Umar, (may Allah Be Pleased with them) said, "If you want to take someone as a model, look at those who died, the Companions of Muhammad (PBUH) the best men of this nation. They were really faithful, modest and knowledgeable. They were selected by Allah to accompany His Prophet (PBUH) and spread His religion. So, imitate their good manners and their

way of life. I swear by the Lord of the Ka'ba that they adhered to the right path."

### **Our greatest men throughout history**

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) in the *Hadith* narrated by *Imam Ahmad* and improved by *Al-Albani* said, "*Allah still grows seeds (people) for this religion and uses them for the sake of His Obedience till the Day of Judgement.*" *Abu Dawoud* and *At-Tirmidhi* narrate that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "*Allah sends a man for this nation every one hundred years to revive the religion.*"

If you consider these two glorious *Hadiths*, you will notice that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) gifted us with a spring of education that never runs out. We can take from them as many wonderful stories as we want. We must be sure of that as the Prophet (PBUH) showed us that this nation has unique and honorable leaves included in its history, and a constellation of great men described by the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) as seeds of Allah and people sent by Allah.

The history of our great nation has the largest number of great people, who performed great deeds and achievements. This is a natural thing as we derive all aspects of greatness from our Messenger (PBUH), the perfect model of goodness, guidance and good manners..

Children are in great need to drink from the fountain of great people in this age that lacks the images of sacrifice, *jihad*, fidelity, pride, faithfulness and fraternity...etc. A child can hardly see such images in the reality of people except through some who are committed to the Book of Allah and His Messenger's *Sunna*. Most people have forgotten or have ignored

these good morals and virtuous conduct in this era of materialism and deviation. This is why the stories of great people are so important. They are able to make a child perceive such images with an understanding heart, attentive ears and a keen desire to apply them. In this regard, *Imam*



on him) says, "You should observe the lives of the forefathers, get acquainted with their writings and news and read their books as often as possible as if they look at them, just as these poetic lines explain: I could not see the houses with my own eyes. I wish to see them through listening."

In summary, we should not forget to indicate that the aesthetic values that we want to instill in the hearts of our children may be transferred through historic, everyday or imaginary stories or in the form of puzzles or riddles. The theme of stories must be based on morality and decency and have supreme goals. Narrative is one of the most effective means for communicating the desired principles and information to children.



## How to Relate Stories to Our Children?

A tale occupies a man's memory through three ways: seeing its events, listening to it or reading it in a book in a manner that an image or a chain of images is recorded in the memory and recalled when needed and thus may affect his morals and behaviour.

When listening to a tale or reading it, the number of effective images recorded in the memory is dependent on the clarity of the events contained in the tale for the receiver, and how far he interacts with it as well as the method adopted for both audible and



readable tales. The style of stories is an important factor for introducing their events, achieving their goals and facilitating their effects. Hence, the Glorious Qur'an is inimitable in the style of its stories, where the stories of the Prophets are presented in a clear and decisive manner. You feel the Divine Hand in their rhythm of events, their order and their presentation. So, when a man with an enlightened mind and understanding heart, reads or listens to a Qur'anic story, he

certainly will live its circumstances, interact with its events and be influenced by its lessons and sermons.

Since every style has its own effects and special taste, a Qur'anic story may be repeated in several *suras* but in different styles for the sake of showing the matchless unique method and diction of the Qur'an. Moreover, the diversity of Qur'anic styles is aimed at portraying lessons that are included in the verses and expressed by words and phrases, and are far-reaching for anyone except knowledgeable people who have been blessed and guided to perceive the beauty and truth of the Qur'an.

Hence, we must choose the best styles for telling stories, which is a difficult task for parents and teachers.

He who masters the art of children's novels can easily interact with the tale he relates every time, whether it is delightful or sad, as he knows it well before telling it to children. Such a person is keen to feel the spirit of the story, realize its essence, determine its aims and specify the points of suspense and excitement with the objective of transferring the atmosphere of the story to the children's minds.



A narrator must speak clearly, simply and naturally, without resorting to extra figures of speech. He must also change his way of recitation so that listeners may not become bored. Moreover, he must make appropriate pauses to control children's emotional tension and give them a chance to get their breath and restore their attention and activity.

It is a good idea to use dialogues and repetition so that listeners can grasp the tale and feel enthused to listen to it. He may say such phrases: What do you think he is going to do? Where do you believe he is going to escape? Will he win in this way?

The element of voice has its own importance in the art of story telling. Voice interaction with events in the tale, or in other words, the change of vocal tones according to the type of event, whether denoting fear, joy or sadness... is a significant and effective factor in the way of presentation.

It is known that bad presentation may distort a wonderful tale. So, our voice should be warm and musical while telling stories to our children for the sake of inculcating noble values and principles and good qualities into their hearts. It is worth mentioning that mothers' voices are always tender, calm and distinguished. They are often coordinated and harmonized with the events of a tale.

A narrator can finish a tale before it really ends in order to hold the interest of children and make them think about the expected end, particularly if the tale is temporarily stopped at a crucial point by saying phrases like: 'He wished that he would have...' or 'When he saw it, he ran quickly to take it, but when he came to it...' Let's complete the story tomorrow, Allah Willing.



A title of a story is of particular importance, as it includes the summary of the tale and its most significant lessons and

examples. So, a narrator must remind children of the story title from time to time till they memorize it through mentioning the stories by their titles. The mother may say, "Do you remember the story of the dove. Who likes the story of the hoopoe..." Similarly, if the children want a certain story to be told to them, they may say, "Father, would you tell us the story of the rain drop or the story of the apple..."

A story teller must surround his tale with a frame of love, compassion and tenderness through approaching children and touching their hair fondly in addition to his (her) affectionate looks, beautiful smiles and kind voice. Such things help children feel secure and comfortable and make the tale penetrate into the depths of their hearts and minds.

A child is greatly influenced by the stories whose heroes bear his (her) name or those telling about some beloved persons or some known places. So, a story teller should link the tale to the child's name, his environment and his acquaintances in a manner that makes it more exciting and interesting.

In conclusion, these are the most important rules of the art of story telling that must be followed by parents and teachers for the sake of attractive and effective stories and reaping numerous benefits and fruit for the hearts and minds of our young ones.

## **When Should We Relate Stories to our Children?**

A story is supposed to depict various aspects of life, present the characters together with their movements, morals, ideas, tendencies, environment and time frames and introduce some of the characters' actions, behavior and arguments. When you observe these actions and behavior and follow the dialogues and arguments, you will recognize different tempers and dispositions and will be pleased with good people and displeased with evil people. A well-phrased story must seize one's attention, arouse his curiosity and make him attentive to carefully follow the events.

Such aspects cannot be achieved by a story unless the above-mentioned rules of story telling are observed. In addition, we must choose the best time for relating the story in a manner that the listener is more prepared to receive its events and interact with them.

The question now is:

What are the best times for relating stories to children?

### **A tale for every situation**

When you are depressed and feel inflicted with life's hardships and troubles, you will find it beneficial to listen to the

story of Prophet Ayoub (Jacob). Allah Says, ﴿(Remember) Ayoub when he supplicated to Allah saying: Oh, Lord. I have been harmed and You Are the Most Merciful of all.﴾

Similarly, when the Devil whispers evils to you and manages to drive you to committing sins, you feel sad and frightened and look forward to listen to the story of Prophet Yunus (Jonah). Allah Says, ﴿(Remember) that man who has a tale with a whale when he became angry with his people and left them. He believed that We would not put him in difficulty. But when he realized his mistake, he supplicated (to Allah) in the darkness (of the whale's belly) saying: There is no god but You, O my Lord. Praise is due to You. I was really a wrongdoer.﴾ Such a story will have a great effect on you and make you repeat the same words of repentance voiced by Prophet Yunus (PBUH).

In this way, a story becomes more impressive and effective when it conforms to the listener's mood and emotional state. So, the family, particularly the father, must not forget the impact of stories on his children. We must concentrate on the principles and good manners that the stories aim to implant in the hearts of children, like patience, selflessness, faithfulness, fidelity, piety, mercy, truthfulness...etc. The best stories containing wonderful models of various types of education are those of the Prophets. It is to be noted here that parents should have a wide range of knowledge of the lives of those perfect men and their supporters. This is necessary so that they are able to relate the suitable story for a certain set of circumstances in which a child is involved for the sake of teaching him the most significant lessons and values.

## **Bedtime stories**

Contemporary child psychologists have called upon mothers to return to telling bedtime stories related by the mother in a loving voice instead of depending on television and videos.. When the mother stays with her child in bed for a while before he sleeps, this brings the child closer to his mother and protects him from fear and worries, and nightmares.

Telling bedtime stories is of particular importance for children as they live in the world of imagination for a longer time than in the world of reality. They are always absent-minded and mix reality with imagination according to their feelings and state of mind. A child dreams while he is awake and deals with a toy as if it was a human being; he speaks to it, orders it, moves it and even beats it to force it to respond to his will and desires. Involvement in imagination is one feature of childhood that has a role in developing a child's way of thinking and self-expression.

Telling bedtime stories is also important, as it remains deep-seated and vivid in a child's memory; it even accompanies him while sleeping. So, the mother must select happy endings for the story and avoid violent stories of violence or those containing horrible, mythical animals that cause him to be worried and scared.

## **Tales at request**

When a child asks us to tell him a tale, it means that he is in the mood and is prepared to listen, interacts with its incidents and benefit from its examples. The child's request is also considered evidence that the child is emotionally related to the

narrator through love and trust. Hence, when the child says: "Tell me a tale" or "I want to listen to a tale" he is actually saying: "Educate me about a moral; teach me a lesson; exchange love with me."



But what can we do if the child asks us to tell him a tale that we have related to him several times?

The child's request for an old story is the best proof that he likes it and is attached to it, and that he is influenced by its lessons. It also means that he wants to make it more deep-rooted in his mind and heart. Still the question is pressing. Should we repeat old tales to children?

The best answer for this question can be derived from the Glorious Qur'an. If you probe the Qur'anic stories with their Divine style and rhythm, you will discover that some of them are repeated at several places. For instance, the story of Prophet Adam is repeated seven times in seven *suras*, however, it does not cause the least boredom to one's ears or hearts. Each time the story is mentioned, it maintains the element of suspense and acquires more freshness and beauty. This is a privilege of the Glorious Qur'an and an aspect of inimitability in a manner that repetition has supreme goals in contrast to what is common among people.

Moreover, the repetition of a story leads to the completion of its elements at the end, the presentation of all its conditions and accompaniments and the depiction of the characters' inner thoughts and feelings. Asserting this fact and citing some scenes of Prophet Musa (Moses), the great Islamic thinker



Abdul-Kareem Al-Khateeb says, "So, we notice that repetition adopted in some Qur'anic stories has a vital function for several aspects that cannot be presented through a single type of expression. But phrases must be repeated several times so that each time they are repeated, they add some information about the scenes in question though these phrases have a common image of the story as a whole."

If you examine the stories in the Glorious Qur'an, you will notice that each story consists of several incidents, and each incident has its own example and aim. The context of the verse in the Holy Qur'an may be reminding the Messenger (PBUH) of the sufferings of the former Messengers; so, the story here deals in detail with an incident of harm and defamation. Similarly, the context of the verse may be reminding the nation of the destruction that befell former oppressive countries. So the same story may be mentioned in detail to serve these purposes.

In conclusion, repetition of Qur'anic stories is used as a technique for the sake of special circumstances, supreme goals and effective lessons as well as for the completion of all story elements and events. All this is achieved through harmonized words, sentences and meanings in an inimitable, rhetorical style that cannot be challenged. These Qur'anic stories are undoubtedly the best stories ever known as they are revealed by Allah, the Most Wise, the Most Commendable.

## Together on the Road of Men of Understanding

Allah Says, ﴿ *There have been examples in their stories for those gifted with understanding hearts. It is not a false talk but an attestation of the previous (revealed) Books, a detailed statement of everything and guidance and mercy for faithful people.* ﴾ (Yusuf: Joseph 111)

*Imam* Ibnu Katheer explains this verse to this effect, "Allah says: The tidings of the Messengers with their people and how the believers were rescued and how the infidels were ruined are mentioned to draw examples by men gifted with understanding hearts." *Imam* Fakhrur-Razi explains the same verse as follows, "Learn that drawing lessons is a process in which you move from the state of ignorance to the state of knowledge for the sake of contemplating and considering, most probably, the stories of Yusuf, his brothers and his father; or, as some say, the stories of the Messengers as a whole since are already mentioned throughout the Qur'an. One can ask why Allah says. ﴿ *...Examples...for those gifted with understanding hearts* ﴾ though Muhammad's people had understanding hearts but many of them did not take lessons from such stories. We may answer to this effect: 'What is meant here is that they were all able to take lessons. Thus, these stories are described as lessons since a wise

man can benefit from them. So, '*men with understanding hearts*,' which is a phrase indicating praise and laudation, are only those who consider and contemplate these stories and make use of them."



We can now come to the conclusion that men gifted with understanding hearts interact with the stories of the Prophets according to three steps:

First step: Contemplation and consideration

Second step: Understanding the examples and lessons of the story and assimilating the pillars of their faith, rules and their moral values.

Third step: Transforming these pillars, rules and values into reality in their present and future.

These three steps are the same words of *Imam Ar-Razi*:... So, '*men with understanding hearts*'... are only those who consider and contemplate these stories and make use of them."It is important to note that consideration and contemplation lead to drawing lessons and examples which, in turn, results in learning the pillars of faith, rules and moral values. *Ar-Razi's* phrase 'and make use of them' cannot be achieved except through trusting them and translating them into everyday practices.

Following in the footsteps of those gifted with understanding hearts, we are going to present our children with a set of useful educational stories together with their Islamic values. We will also introduce a group of practical means relating to the easy

application of these stories with the help of parents. May Allah Help us to satisfy Him... Amen.

These practical means are appropriate for children who are 3 - 4 years of age.

## First Step

### The Honest Man's Piece of Wood

Abu Huraira, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, *"An Israelite asked another to lend him one thousand dinars. The lender said: 'Bring me witnesses to*



serve as proof of making a loan.' The borrower said: 'Enough for a witness between you and me is Allah.' The lender said: 'Bring me a guarantor.' The borrower replied : 'Enough for a guarantor between you and me is Allah.' The lender said: 'You are right.' He then gave the money to the borrower for a certain period of time. After that, the borrower travelled by sea and spent the money on some life necessities and worked for some time. Then he searched for a boat to go to the money lender and return the money to the lender on the fixed date but he did not find any means of transport. So, he got a piece of wood, made a hole in it, inserted one thousand dinars, together with a letter to the lender inside the hole and filled it. After that, he went to the seashore and said: 'Oh, Lord! You know for sure that I wanted to borrow one thousand dinars from so and so. He asked for witnesses and I said: Enough for a witness between you and me is Allah, and

he was satisfied. He then asked for a guarantor and I said: Enough for a guarantor between you and me is Allah, and he was satisfied. Oh, Lord. I have done my best to find a boat to go to the money lender and repay the debt but I have failed, so, I put this money in Your Protection. Then, the borrower threw the piece of wood into the sea and left.

Meanwhile, the lender was waiting for the borrower's arrival from over the sea to take his money on the set date, but to no avail. Then, he spotted the piece of wood and took it thinking he would make a fire. When he sawed it, he discovered the money and the letter. After a while, the borrower returned and brought another thousand dinars and said to the lender: I swear by Allah that I earnestly searched for a boat to return home and give you the money at the appointed time but I could not find any until now. Then, the lender said: Didn't you send me anything? The borrower said: No. I told you that I could not find any boats apart from the one I came on. At that moment the lender said: Allah brought to me the money you sent inside the piece of wood. Then, the borrower took the other thousand dinars and left safely.

## **Aesthetic Values**

## **Practical Lessons**

When you lend money to others, you will receive great recompense.

Allah witnesses all our actions, words, and all our affairs.

We should exert every effort to keep our promises, because Allah will ask us about them on the Day of Judgement.

Allah, Glory to Him, helps those who have sincere intentions and steadfast determination.

We must supplicate to Allah and trust Him so that whatever we have to do, it will be done perfectly.

The best society is the one where honesty and faithfulness prevail.

It is a great blessing when we are not in the position to have to borrow from others.

We can show our gratitude to Allah for the fact that we are not in need, through: Giving alms to both children and adults.

Making supplication like, "O Lord! Praise to You in a manner matching with Your Glorious Face and Supreme Authority." A child should learn the benefits of such supplication and repeat it at least once a week.

A child can memorize a Qur'anic verse and a Prophetic tradition about keeping one's promises in order to instill morals into his heart as a matter of creed and faith.

We must follow up and ensure that the child keeps his promises by saying for example, "Be careful, that it is a promise." We must also help the child to keep his promises however insignificant they may appear. We can also reward him when he does keep his promises, even with a nominal prize like a kiss, a smile or praise and encouragement.

The child can memorize such phrases like "Allah is with me; Allah looks at me; Allah witnesses my actions" and repeat them at least once a day. We should remind the child of these phrases whenever he makes a mistake, lies or breaks his promise.

## Second Step

### Neighbor's Rights

The famous scholar Abu Haneefa (PBUH) used to live in the city of Kufa (in Iraq) and he had a neighbor, who worked as a shoemaker all day long. He came home in the evening, had dinner and started to sing a song in a loud voice, in a manner that annoyed and upset his neighbors.



As Abu Haneefa used to pray all night long, he was displeased with his neighbor's singing. One night, Abu Haneefa did not hear the singer and asked the other neighbors about him. They told him that he had been arrested and imprisoned by the police. At that moment, Abu Haneefa ran to the governor of Kufa, who warmly received him due to his great status, and asked him about his requests. "I have a neighbor who works as a shoemaker. He has been seized by the police and I wish that you order his release," requested the eminent scholar. Immediately the governor responded to Abu Haneefa's request.



Then, Abu Haneefa left the governor and rode his animal, followed by the shoemaker. When they arrived home, Abu Haneefa looked at the neighbor and asked, "Have we wronged you, man?" The neighbor answered, "No. You have saved me and observed the rights of neighbors. May Allah reward you, Abu Haneefa." From that day onward, the man no longer annoyed Abu Haneefa. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "The best neighbor to Allah is the best to his neighbour."

## Third Step

### The Kind Neighbor

Salim is a kind-hearted generous man. He has a poor neighbor called Sami. One day, Sami needed money and decided to sell his house. Some people came to him and asked about its price. He said, "I want two thousand pounds." A



potential buyer said, "But the house is not worth such a big amount of money. It is only worth one thousand pounds." Sami said smilingly, "This is true. But I have a kind and generous man called Salim who always asks about me, greets me whenever he meets me, visits me when I'm ill, lends me what I need and sends me presents. He also shares my joys and sadness and hasn't disturbed me since I came to this house." When the buyers heard this, they said, "He who has a neighbor like Salim must not sell his house."

Afterwards, when Salim learned about what had happened between Sami and the buyers, he became sad as he didn't know

that his neighbor needed money. Soon he went to Sami and said to him, "Don't sell your house, my kind neighbor, but take the money you need. I want you to be my neighbor forever. You know the rights of neighbors quite well." When the people of Kufa heard about Salim's story with his neighbor, they were happy, wishing that they all had had neighbors like Sami and Salim.

## **Aesthetic Values**

### **Practical Lessons**

What a wonderful society when neighbors have such good relations with one another.

We must always make sure that our neighbors are getting on all right.

We must exchange any offences from our neighbors with charity and be patient with their disturbances.

We must speak well of our neighbors.

It is beautiful to thank those who do you a favour by saying, "May Allah Reward you."

We must not harm our neighbors. We must respect their feelings by not annoying them for example, loud sounds or the smell of food.

A child can memorize a Qur'anic verse and a Prophetic tradition about how to behave well with neighbors, and should be rewarded for his memorization. We must remind him of the verse and the tradition if he does harm to a neighbor, so that he may adhere to the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunna* and be committed to piety.

The child can give his neighbor a present through the encouragement of an older person. This present could be a nominal one like food or fruit.

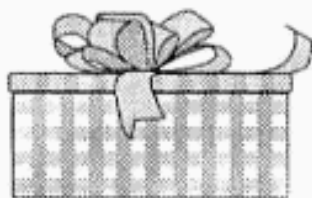
We can visit our neighbors with the company of parents once a month for instance.

We must encourage the child to treat the neighbors' children tenderly and play with them in a friendly way.

We must prevent the child from going out of the house while eating fruit or food so that the neighbors' children will not feel envious.

We must observe our neighbors' happy occasions and participate in them. We must also invite our neighbors to share our happy occasions with us. The child can take part in these occasions according to his age.

We must always make sure that our neighbors are getting all right and urge the child to share with us in these endeavors.

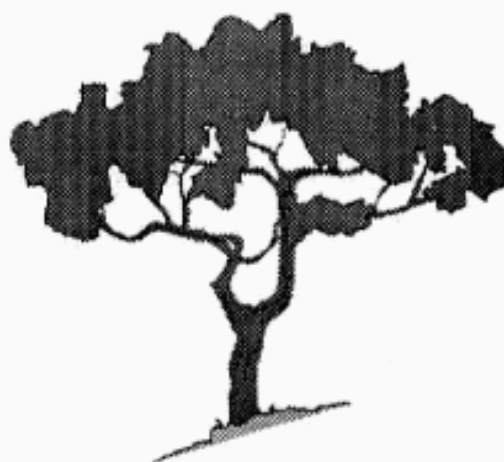


## Fourth Step

### Uncle Salih's Tree

Uncle Salih was a poor man who had nothing except an axe that he used for work. He was satisfied with the few pennies he earned. Although he was poor, he was happy because he owned a precious thing: people's love for him.. He also loved people very much and felt that Allah loved him for this compassion.

One day, uncle Salih was tilling the land he was responsible for. He was about to finish work when the sun was bidding farewell to him. At that moment, uncle Salih talked to himself, "Day is about to come to an end and I have almost finished work. It is no problem. The sun is about to vanish and so is my age. I have become old and I will pass away like the sun.



Uncle Salih became depressed for a while but he once again started to look at the horizon and said, "I possess people's love."His face was clouded with sadness once more. He said. "People may forget me... But they should always remember me

for my good deeds. What can I do then?" Uncle Salih thought for some time and finally thought of a wonderful idea. The following day, he brought a bush and planted it on the side of the road. Oh, dear listeners. He planted the bush at such a place for two reasons. First, he did not possess any land but he worked for another man. Second, anyone who walked in that area hardly found a shady spot.

Whenever uncle Salih passed the tree, he watered it, leveled the earth around it and washed the leaves of dust. He became happier when he saw the tree grow and flourish more and more.

One day, uncle Salih was absent and people were grieved at his disappearance. They praised his sincerity, kind-heartedness and love of the land. But life is always changeable; people got involved in their affairs and they rarely remembered him.

Meanwhile, the tree was growing and forming a tall stalk and extended branches. People used to sit under its shade and some of them asked, "Who planted this tree on the side of the road?" They were answered, "It was uncle Salih." Some saw him while he was planting it, others saw him while he was watering it and others saw him while he was leveling the earth around it. Since then, the tree had been called after the name of uncle Salih. Everyone who sat in its shade used to raise his hands in supplication to Allah that uncle Salih be rewarded because he had planted that tree that had granted them shade, fruit and comfort.

## **Aesthetic Values**

### **Practical Lessons**

One day we will all return to Allah, no matter how long we might have lived in this world.

Money is not everything. There are things that are more precious, like love of Allah, His Messenger and the believers.

Good deeds add blessings to one's age even if it is short.

Man must always think of pleasing Allah and it is a great blessing to remember Allah at all times.

Poverty is not a hindrance to production, excellence and obtaining people's love.

Let's think. How can we be like uncle Salih:

To be loved by people

To leave a good thing from which people may benefit and for which they may remember us. We can give a prize for the best proposal.

If we have a garden, we can let each child plant a tree and call it after his name, provided that he takes care of it. We can also plant trees in the street or any other suitable place.

We can get children to memorize a verse and a tradition about the effects of man's deeds after death. We can give the child a prize for this effort.

We should teach children that passing knowledge on to others is just like planting a tree. If the child teaches his friend a verse, a tradition or a moral, he thus grows a tree that will bear fruit and for which he will be greatly rewarded by Allah.

## **Fifth Step**

### **The Rooster**

With the first shimmer of morning, a rooster wakes up and crows declaring a new dawn and a new day. Hearing the sound of the rooster, uncle 'Uthman gets up feeling happy and delighted. He makes ablution and goes to the mosque for prayers. He raises his voice to call for dawn prayers and so breaks the silence of the whole universe around him: Allah Is the Greatest...Allah Is the Greatest...I bear testimony that there is no god but Allah. I bear testimony that Muhammad is His Messenger. Prayers are better than sleeping.



The rooster is so pleased when he hears uncle 'Uthman's beautiful, touching voice through the loud speaker. This voice reaches the houses of the whole village to awake its people to get prepared to receive a new day and go to the mosque for prayers and go to work afterwards.



Uncle 'Uthman has been calling for dawn prayers in the mosque for ten years. He has been inviting people to come to prayer and prosperity in a moving, beautiful voice. He has never left this duty for even a single day and everyone has been responding to his call. He is pleased with the people's response and is even more pleased with the fact that prayer callers will have the longest necks on the Day of Judgement as said by the Prophet (PBUH).

One day, the rooster woke up and crowed as usual and waited for uncle 'Uthman but he did not get up. It kept silent for a while then crowed anew but uncle 'Uthman did not awake. Looking through his bedroom window, the rooster realized that uncle 'Uthman was ill and was not able to leave his bed. Immediately, it ran to the mosque and entered from a window. Then he hastened to the loud speaker and started to crow. There was a new caller inviting people for prayers and prosperity that day. People got up and went to the mosque to find the rooster waiting for them. The worshippers learned what had happened to uncle 'Uthman and praised the rooster for what he had done. After finishing prayers, some people went to visit their caller and prayed that Allah might grant him a speedy recovery.

## **Aesthetic Values**

## **Practical Lessons**

Dawn (*Fajr*) is one of the best times of day and getting up early has many benefits.

A prayer caller will receive great recompense from Allah because he glorifies the Word of Allah and invites people to His Worship.

What a beautiful thing that Muslims meet in prayers and start their friendships at the mosque.

Visiting sick people also has great rewards and recompense. It is evidence of the unity, power, cooperation and mercy of Muslims

A child can participate in presenting food and water to domestic animals and birds and caring for them.

We can relate to the child the story of how the prayer call (*adhaan*) started in Islam and show him (her) the status of prayer callers. We can then teach him how to recite the call to prayer and urge him to memorize the invocation of Allah, relating to the call.

The child should memorize the supplication taught to us when hearing the sound of a rooster.

We can take the child with us when visiting a sick friend of his or any sick adult.

We can take a four or five-year old child to the *fajr* prayers from time to time so that he can taste the sweetness of such prayers and give him a prize for that. When he is seven years old, we must order him to perform prayers especially *al-fajr* to make it easy and lovable for him to continue doing so in the future.

The child can memorize a verse and a tradition about the great status of the dawn time and *fajr* prayers and should be given awards for his regularity.

## Sixth Step

### Truth Is a Rescuer

The pious scholar Abdul-Qadir Al-Jilani, (may Allah grant him mercy) says, " Since my early years, I have been used to being truthful. Once, I left Makkah and headed for Baghdad for the sake of



seeking knowledge. My mother gave me then forty dinars for my expenses and took a promise from me to tell the truth. When my companions and I reached the land of Hamadhan, a gang of thieves attacked us and took the possessions of our convoy. One of the thieves asked me, " What do you have? I said, " Forty dinars." He thought I was mocking him and he left me. Another thief asked me about what I had and I told him about the money. He then took me to the gang leader who asked me, " What pushed you to tell the truth?" I said, " I promised my mother to be truthful and I fear to break my promise."

The gang leader was seized by fear. He cried out, tearing his clothes and saying, "You fear to break your mother's promise while I don't fear to break Allah's promise!" He then ordered his men to return the stolen goods and said, " I repent of my sins for

Allah's sake at your hands." Then, the gang members declared, "You were our chief highwayman and now you are the chief one in repentance."

## **Aesthetic Values**

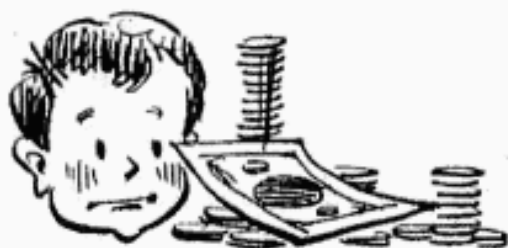
### **Practical Lessons**

Truthfulness guides to piety whereas lying leads to immorality.

Truthfulness will rescue you even if you think that sometimes it is destructive.

We must face up to thieves and oppressors, as we are powerful as long as we are in the right.

What a beautiful society this could be, if it is blessed with truthfulness and not plagued with lying and deceit.



We must endure all troubles surrounding gaining knowledge for the sake of Islam and Muslims.

We could hold a competition among children or between a child and his parents and call it 'the race of the truthful' For instance, the father says: 'This week is the week of truthfulness. Every one must tell the truth and write down how many times he lies. He who lies less or speaks the truth more, will be given a prize. We must do our best to be truthful and honest in this competition and it can be repeated several times.

We must not punish a child in some situations where he tells the truth and admits his mistakes. We may say to him, 'As you are truthful, Allah saves you from punishment.'

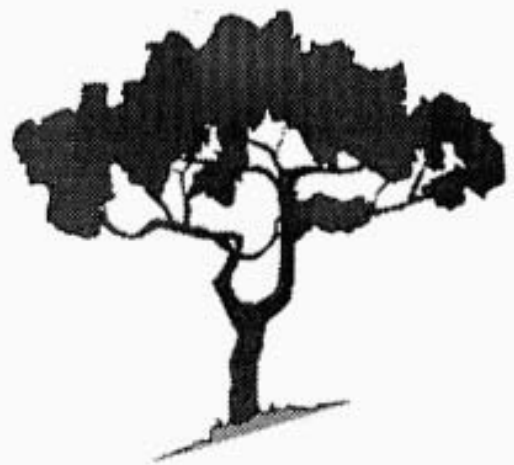
The child can memorize a verse and a tradition about the virtue of truthfulness and the vice of falsehood.

We can bring a map and show the child the location of Baghdad and the course taken by *Imam* Abdul-Qadir Al-Jilani during his journey to seek knowledge via a convoy of camels and horses. We can then urge the child to thank Allah as his (her) school is near and easy to reach.

## Seventh Step

### Iman and the Orange

There was a girl named Iman and she loved oranges. One day, while she was walking in her family's garden, she found herself suddenly in front of the orange tree. She said to the tree, 'I want to pick an orange of yours,' and so she jumped but failed to reach it. Then she went to their cow and said to her, 'Oh, cow! I want to pick an orange but the fruit is too high for me to reach. What can I do?' The cow replied, 'Oh Iman! Allah created me so that people drink my milk and eat my meat. Come to drink some of my milk and grow up and then you will be able to reach the oranges at the top of the tree.' Iman said, 'I want to grow up now and take an orange at once.' The cow replied, 'But if you drink milk, you will grow up step by step and day after day you will be able to reach the top of the tree.'



Next, Iman went to their donkey to ask him to help her reach the oranges at top of the tree. The donkey said, 'I'm a mere donkey with poor thinking. You can think Iman, and I'll carry

out your request.' Iman thought for a while and suddenly said to the donkey, 'Can you let me ride on your back to reach the oranges?' The donkey welcomed her. As soon as Iman rode on the donkey's back, she could reach the oranges. So, she managed to achieve what she wanted by using her mind and thinking.

## **Aesthetic Values**

### **Practical Lessons**

Allah's Blessings are infinite. "If you want to count Allah's Blessings, you will fail."

Good nutrition is the road to strength and vigor as a good mind accompanies a strong body.

Allah honoured us with a mind in comparison with other creatures. So we must safeguard it and use it in the most beneficial way.

Allah made the universe in service to us. He subjected animals, plants and birds for our benefit. So, we must thank Allah and treat these creatures well.

We can achieve what we want first of all through Allah's help then by adhering to the use of reason.

We must thank Allah, The Benefactor through:

a) supplication b) giving alms

Then, we must thank parents through

a) obedience b) treating them tenderly

We must also thank people by saying

May Allah reward you.

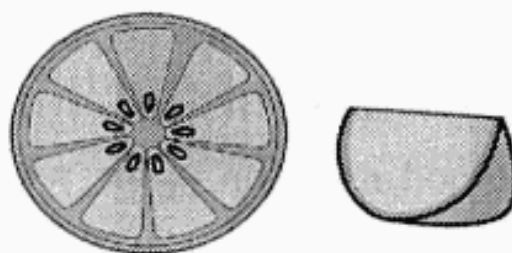
Let's use our minds just like Iman did and solved the problem of the oranges. Let's think about our own problems. We can define a number of problems that face a child and give him the chance to solve them with our help and guidance like:

Getting water at night

fear of darkness

overspending

Let's think together. Allah Created every creature to play a certain role in life. Here we can cite the example of the donkey and the cow in Iman's story. Hence, what is our role in this world and how to perform it? " I (Allah) Created both man and jinni to worship Me."



The child can memorize a verse and a tradition and be rewarded for that.

We must take care of our food in order that we can seek knowledge and help weak people...etc. Thus, the child is taught to have a good intention whenever he eats. We should remind him (her) of this good intention by saying, 'We are going to eat, *Insha'a* Allah. Why do we eat?' When he (she) gives a good answer, we can give a suitable award.



## **Eighth Step**

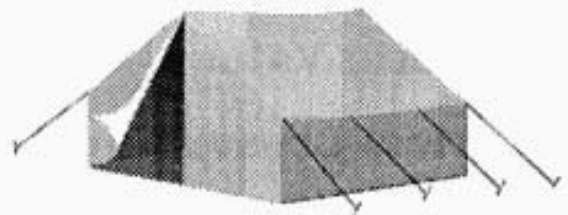
### **'Umar's Pity**

It was related that 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), went out one day to make sure that the Muslims' condition was good because it was very cold. He saw a light next to a tent and approached it to find an old woman burning a fire under a kettle, while her children were crying around her. 'Umar asked the woman why her children were crying. She said,

'They are crying because of hunger.' He asked, 'What is in the kettle?' She replied, 'I put water and a few stones to silence them and make them think I'm cooking so that they would fall asleep.'

Then the woman started to supplicate to Allah to punish 'Umar, saying, 'Allah Judges between 'Umar and us.' She didn't know that it was 'Umar who was standing right in front of her at that time. He asked, 'Why do you say that?' The old woman said, 'He, as a Caliph (Leader of the Muslims) must alleviate our pains'. He replied, 'How can he have known about your affairs?' She said, 'How can he be responsible for us and neglect us.'

'Umar then left the woman and went to the Muslims' Treasure House (*Bait al mal*) and then returned to the woman's



tent, carrying a sack of flour on his back, a can of cooking butter in one hand and a can of honey in the other. He gave all these things to the woman. Next, he took some flour and some butter and put them in the kettle and turned them up, then added honey till the mixture became well cooked. Then, he put the mixture in a dish and presented to the children who ate till they were satisfied.



The old woman thanked 'Umar for his help and said, 'May Allah reward you. You deserve to be a Caliph instead of 'Umar.' He said, 'If you come to the Prince (Caliph) of Believers tomorrow, you will find me there.' At that moment, the woman realized that she was talking to 'Umar, the Caliph. She then apologized and wished good for him.

### **Aesthetic Values**

### **Practical Lessons**

We must sympathize with the poor and needy and wish good for them.

What a beautiful society it is where the rich search for the poor to help them in an atmosphere of mercy, pity and love.

Every one must bear his share of responsibility and commitments. He must not be haughty towards others and deny their rights.

We have the greatest role model and example in the Companions of the Messenger (PBUH). We must be patient with the difficulties of life as Allah's relief and mercy are very close.

We must talk about the news of the poor and needy around us and ask ourselves, 'Can we do something for them as our master 'Umar, (may Allah Be Pleased with him), did. We can give alms, no matter how small, to them. A child can share in this charitable work.

Let's ask ourselves, 'How can we save ourselves from poverty at the time when the conditions of the poor are characterized by worry, tiredness and trouble.

We can remind the child of the prayers that are mentioned by the Prophet (PBUH) in this regard and urge him to memorize and repeat them.

The child can memorize a verse and a tradition about sympathizing with the poor and be rewarded for that.

We must thank Allah as we are not poor or needy through:

a) supplication b) giving alms c) others

## **Ninth Step**

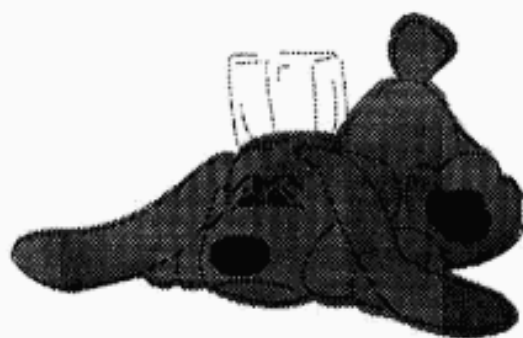
### **The Good Man and the Dog**

A man left his village and traveled to finish some work. On the way, the water and the food he had finished. After a while, he felt very hungry and thirsty. He started to search for water but in vain. While he was walking, he found a well of water and said, 'Thank Allah Who saved me from death.' The man got down to drink from the well after he had left his belongings outside. With a big effort, he reached the water and drank till he became satisfied and thanked Allah once more, then he got out of the well and took his luggage to resume his journey.

Suddenly, he saw a dog beside the well. He asked himself, 'What is this dog doing?' He stepped out, looked at it and said, 'Ah, it is as thirsty as I was. It is panting and licking the earth out of thirst. I must water it. But can I water it while I don't have anything for it to drink from?' He thought and looked right and left saying, 'What can I do?'

Soon, he said, 'I know!' He lifted his foot and removed his shoe. Then, he went down the well again, filled his shoe with water, caught it between his teeth and went up. When the dog saw the man, it ran to him and started to drink while the man was pleased and happy. Allah thanked this good man for his noble deed and forgave his sins and brought him to Paradise.

This is the behavior of the true Muslim who appreciates Allah's Graces and helps others as much as he can.



## **Aesthetic Values**

## **Practical Lessons**

Allah has given us many graces. His blessings are uncountable and include abundance of water and various comfortable means of transport.

What a beautiful thing it is to have pity and mercy on animals as such deeds may be the reason for entering Paradise. In addition, animals feel pain and suffer like us.

When we extend charity to others (people, animals, birds...etc.) we taste a kind of pleasure and happiness that cannot be attained except by kind-hearted, merciful people.

We must not consume much water when making ablution or having a bath. We must watch a child in this respect and remind him of the story of the good man and the dog.

We can examine the miracles of Allah concern rain. There are some places that are frequented by torrents while others are stricken by drought. We can draw the child's attention to such facts so that he gets used to pondering on the marvels of the universe surrounding him.

We can raise a domestic cat at home and feed the dogs in the streets.

The child should memorize some prayers connected with drinking water.

Memorization of a verse or a tradition about the blessings of water and avoiding wasting it. We also must thank Allah for this great blessing.

Let's think together about the purposes for which we can use water. Children can be given a chance to think and the one who mentions the larger number of uses will take a prize.

## Tenth Step

### Forest Fire

At one of the far-reached forests, there were a group of animals living in happiness and pleasure. One night, a fierce storm blew and lightening burnt some of the forest trees. Animals were scared and ran here and there in fear of fire. At that moment, the lion roared powerfully and ordered the animals to gather in front of his den to solve that problem. The hyena said: We want to depart and leave this hateful forest. The wolf said: You are right. We should not exhaust ourselves and endanger our life for the sake of this forest. The elephant got very angry and said: Oh, cowards. How can we flee and abandon the land on which we have lived and eaten and enjoyed its wealth? The giraffe said: How can we face up to such massive fire while we are weak animals? Here, the horse said: We can do as the rains did. Being astonished, the animals looked at the horse and said in a single voice: What did rains do?



The horse said: I saw the rains falling from the sky down on the fire and put it out. Why then don't we act like the rains and put fire out by water? Here, the donkey said: But the water is far away. How can we move it from the river to the burnt trees? The lion said: Let's cooperate together and carry the water inside our mouths and spray it on the fire and never be relaxed until we extinguish the fire. Come on and follow me.

The animals started to work on full swings till they managed to put the fire out and happiness once again came back to their beloved forest.

## **Aesthetic Values**

### **Practical Lessons**

A society will be safe and peaceful if its members cooperate with, advise and love one another.

We must not surrender to any problem, however difficult it may be, since when we do our best and adhere to the use of reason, Allah will help us solve it.

It is one of Allah's universal laws that every place must have a head and subordinates to assist him. The forest, for instance, is headed by the lion and the house is headed by the father and the class is headed by a student chosen from among other students...etc.

It is one of Allah's blessings on us to save us from fire, earthquakes and volcanoes that we hear about and witness their destructive effects.

Animals know how to solve the problem of fire, so let's think about solving our problems. The father sits with the family



members to think with the children positively participating in discussion..

a) The problem of bread. How to get it?

b) The problem of hot and cold weather. How can we overcome it?

In addition to other problems in the family's environment.

A child memorizes some prayers that safeguard from fire and help put it out and always repeats them.

Let's adhere to the ways of avoiding fire:

Turn off the butane cylinder after use.

Use the iron carefully.

Don't play with matches.

The child can think of things like this and try to practice them.

As we think of the fire of this world, how then can we avoid the fire of the hereafter? "Protect yourself against fire even with a half of a date (to be given to a poor man)."

Thus, let's give alms.

## **Touches of Beauty**

Diligent scholars, talented men of letters, and faithful educators make every effort to leave touches of beauty in the minds and hearts of children. Is it logical then, dear merciful father and kind mother, that all those people work hard and do their best to benefit your children, while you neglect the task. Certainly, we do not expect you to assume a negative attitude. It is important that parents realize how much their children trust them. This trust should be a powerful push towards a new start towards the Islamic education of our children.

As a first step, we are going to present a set of selected educational stories for children but without discussing their aesthetic elements or their practical lessons and leave this duty on the shoulders of parents so that they may add their own touches of beauty to the hearts and minds of their children. This collection of stories can be a first step for the project of the garden of stories that we proposed before.

We sincerely pray that Allah will help us to work for the good and interest of our children and reward us for these touches of beauty on the Day of Judgement that demand only sincere deeds.

## **First Touch**

### **The Jar of Gold**

While a man was tilling his land and repeating within himself, 'Thanks to Allah that He bestowed on me a plot of land that I can cultivate and benefit from,' he found a jar full of gold. The Devil tried to convince the man that the jar was his and not the property of the former owner of the land. Overwhelmed by fear of Allah, the man screamed, 'No, it is not mine. I bought the land and didn't buy the jar!' He made haste and carried the jar and went to the previous landlord and said to him, 'This is your jar; I found it while I was tilling the land.' Meanwhile, the landlord was faithful and honest and he refused to take the jar saying, 'It is your jar. I sold you the land and what is in it.' The man replied, 'How can I take the jar while I didn't buy ?'

The two men disagreed. Each one wanted to concede the land to the other. Finally, they decided to resort to the judge. The judge listened to the story from each one and admired them for their truthfulness and honesty. He passed a decision that was satisfactory to both of them. The judge asked them, 'Have you got any children?' One of them said, 'Yes, I have a son.' And the other said, 'Yes. I have a daughter.' At that moment the judge said, 'Then marry the girl to the boy and spend some of the gold on their marriage expenses and give the rest as alms to poor people.'

The two men left the wise judge feeling very pleased with his decision.

## Second Touch

### The Apple

This is a historic story. It goes like this. A twenty-five year old young man was walking beside an apple orchard when he started to feel hungry. He stretched out his hand and took an apple. After he had eaten half the apple, he



remembered that he had not taken permission from the owner of the garden. He looked right and left and saw a man sitting in the distance. He approached him and said to him, 'I was hungry and I took this apple and ate a half of it and I came to take permission from you for the half I ate.' The man said, 'I'm only the guard of the garden, its owner lives in a village that takes twenty four hours by walking to reach. Then, the young man headed for the village till he reached the house of the owner and told him what happened and asked him to forgive him for the first half of the apple he had eaten.

The owner of the garden said, 'I will not forgive you unless you marry my daughter. This is my only condition. Before you agree to marry her, let me introduce her to you. She is deaf, dumb, blind and crippled.' The young man said to himself, 'I

came here to make the food I ate permissible and satisfy Allah so that He may accept my supplication. I must agree to this condition.' Next, he came in to see his bride and to his surprise he found her beautiful and without any defect. He then asked her why her father why he had talked that way about her. She replied,

I'm deaf. I don't listen to words that displease Allah.

I'm dumb. I don't utter words that displease Allah.

I'm blind. I don't see what displeases Allah.

I'm crippled. I don't move towards something that displeases Allah.'

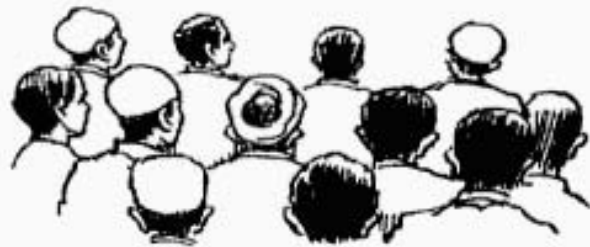
Immediately, the young man accepted the marriage and later had Imam Abu Haneefat an-Nu'man, (may Allah be pleased with him and satisfy him.)

## Third Touch

### Bread and Darkness

Dear children, Altruism is when we think of the needs of other people instead of our own.

It was related that thirty men met in the house of Al-Hassan Al-Antaki who did not have enough food for them and only presented a few loaves of bread. One of



the guests proposed that the loaves be cut and the lamp be turned off. After a while, the host turned the lamp on and all the people were surprised that the pieces of bread remained exactly as they were. Every one preferred to give to the chance to the other guests who might have been hungrier than they were.

The outcome was that they all ate nothing as they followed the Prophet's piece of advice, " Oh Muslims, your faith (*iman*) will not be complete until he wishes that his brother has what he likes to have."

## Fourth Touch

### An Ideal of Nobility

While a city governor, accompanied by senior officials, was sitting in a court yard to judge among the people and settle the disputes between them, two young men were pulling a youth by the collar towards him. The governor at them in astonishment and said, 'What is the matter?' The two young men said, 'Oh, *Amir*, we are two brothers and we had an old father who was killed by this youth. We request that he be punished for his crime according to Allah's rules.' The governor looked at the youth and asked him, 'Is it true?' The youth answered, 'Yes. I was hunting a deer with arrows and one of them shot their father by mistake. Then, the two young men hurriedly caught me and brought me to you.'

'You admit what you did. Manslaughter necessitates paying blood money (compensation). You must pay five hundred dinars.' The youth said, 'I obey and carry out your judgement, *Amir*. I'm satisfied with the rule of Islam, but would you let me go to bring the money and that man,- (pointing to the governor's minister) guarantees me?'

The governor said to his minister, 'Did you hear his words? Do you guarantee that this youth will come back?' The minister



answered, 'Yes. I guarantee him for three days.' The governor was satisfied with this guarantee and allowed the youth to leave.

Days passed and the period of grace elapsed but the youth did not come to the governor, while the people along with the two young men were waiting. The minister said, 'If he does not come, I would adhere to my guarantee and surrender to the *Amir*.' At that moment, those who were present started to cry and some of the elite proposed that they pay the compensation but the two young men refused.

While people were making much noise and feeling sorry for the minister, the youth came cheerfully and stood before the *Amir* saying, 'This is the compensation you demanded. I kept my promise so that people will not say that faithfulness does no longer exist.' Then the minister said, 'I guaranteed this youth though I don't know him so that people will not say that nobility does no longer exist. When he asked for my help and said that man (meaning himself) guarantees me, my nobility drove me to assist him so that people will not say that grace does no longer exist. At that time, the two young men said, 'Oh, *Amir*. We have conceded our right so that people will not say that benevolence no longer exists.'

## Fifth Touch

### The Rooster and the Cunning Fox

It is related that there was a fluent rooster. He used to play and flap his wings under the sun in front of a small house in a village. Now and then, he used to crow several consecutive times. One day, a wolf



passed by the rooster and said to him, 'What a beautiful rooster you are today! Your feathers are clean and your crest is brightly reddish. I have never heard a sweeter voice than yours. It is different from the voice of your father that I had known for a long time.' (This was a trick made by the fox). Then the rooster said to the fox, 'Hey! My voice is as beautiful as my father's. He then flapped his wings, closed his eyes, opened his beak and got ready to sing and crow.

At that time, the rooster thought of a trick to escape from the fox. While he was between the paws of the fox he said, 'Shout at them and say to them, 'This cock is mine alone and none will share with me.' When the fox started to open his mouth, the rooster fell to the ground and in no time he flew onto a tree for shelter. The fox regretted his action and controlled his rage

saying, 'May Allah forgive the mouth that speaks at the time he must keep silent.' The rooster then said, 'May Allah forgive the eyes that close at the time they must open.'

## Sixth Touch

### The Rabbit and the Turtle

Once upon a time, a rabbit and a turtle lived next to one another. One day, the turtle said to the rabbit, 'You rebuke me because I walk slowly and you run quickly. Today, I challenge you to beat me in a race.' The rabbit most proudly said, 'Hey! How can I, the quick rabbit, race a turtle that walks with difficulty! This is really funny.'



However, the rabbit accepted the challenge and agreed to race the turtle to the hill. They started racing.

The rabbit relied on his running skills, he felt haughty with his speed and spent much time playing here and there and eating some clover and carrots, while the turtle was serious, and kept walking on her way and did not stop at all until she reached her destination. When the rabbit looked to see where the turtle was, the turtle had already reached the hill. It was too late for the rabbit to catch up.

Thus, the turtle won the race thanks to her patience and diligence while the rabbit lost because he did not perform his duty on time and was self-conceited with his speed and skill.

## Seventh Touch

### The Raindrop

Our neighbour Tariq went with his daughter, Dalia to buy her new shoes. After Tariq had bought the shoes for Dalia and while they were returning home, it was raining heavily and the ground was completely covered with water to the



extent that ponds of water and dirt hindered the way of passers-by. Dalia got angry and said,, 'Pooh! Where is this rain coming from?'

Before her father could answer, a raindrop from among those on her shoulders answered, 'I have a long story, Dalia. I was a drop of water in the River Nile but the sun dried me and sent me into the sky in the form of vapour just like a balloon. The vapour went up and up where I joined my sisters and formed a cloud. Sometimes, the wind threw us forwards and backwards. One very cold day, my cloud collided with another in the sky and I fell to the ground in the form of rain. At this moment, Dalia said, 'But you are bad, raindrop because you wet our clothes and make the road dirty.' The raindrop said, 'Don't forget, Dalia that rain washes the leaves of trees and clears the air from dust.'

Next Dalia asked her father, 'Is the raindrop's talk true, father?' He answered, 'Yes.' Dalia said, 'But who created raindrops, father?'

The father replied, 'It is Allah, Glory to Him. He Is The Creator of everything. Thank Allah, The Lord of worlds.'

## **Eighth Touch**

### **The Stolen Horse**

Abdullah used to have an original Arabian horse. One night, a thief stole it. Abdullah then went to the village market to buy another horse. To his surprise, he found his stolen horse being ridden by a man who was



about thirty years old. Abdullah held the bridle of the horse and shouted at the top of his voice, 'This horse is mine. I was robbed of it last night.' But the horseman said politely, 'You are mistaken, sir. This is my horse. I bought it a year ago. It may look like your horse but it is mine for sure.'

Hearing that, Abdullah threw his clock on the head of the horse quickly and cried, 'As long as you have possessed the horse for a year, you must know his defective eye.' At that moment, the horseman got a little confused and said, 'His left eye.' Abdullah said, 'No, it is perfect.' Next, the horseman shouted, 'Oh, no. I forgot. His right eye is defective.' Here Abdullah revealed the two eyes of the horse and said to the people around him, 'Look carefully. The two eyes of this horse

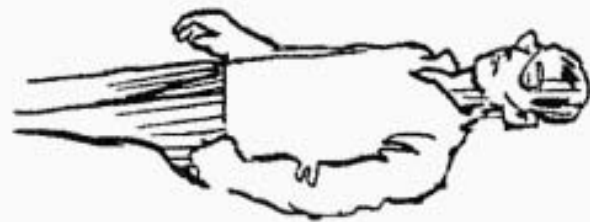
are perfect. This is evidence that this man is a thief.' The people were pleased with Abdullah's funny trick and led the *thief* to the police station to be punished for his crime.



## Ninth Touch

### A Friend in Need

Once upon a time, there were two friends, Tamir and Medhat. One day, they were walking in a forest when they suddenly saw a large, wild



bear. Tamir ran to the closest tree and hid between its branches and leaves in order not to be seen by the bear.

Medhat stood in his place and was besieged by the bear. He remembered what he had learned about the nature of bears through the stories of animals and birds. He acted according to the best of his knowledge to save himself.

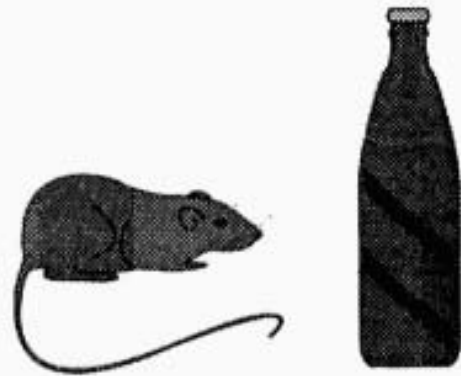
Medhat lay on the ground, did not move and held his breath as if he were dead. He played the role perfectly as when the bear approached him and smelt his body, it thought that he was dead and left him. It is known that bears dislike dead bodies and do not eat the flesh of the dead. Medhat then stood up while Tamir climbed down from the tree and came close to Medhat. He said laughing, 'Tell me, pray, what the bear whispered to you.' Now Tamir had escaped even though he did not know the nature of bears and did not help his friend who was in distress, so Medhat said smilingly: 'What a wise bear he was! He said to me,

'Beware of a friend who abandons you at times of danger and distress.'"

## Tenth Touch

### The Mouse and the Oil

A mouse entered the kitchen of a house and found a bottle filled with edible oil without a lid. He put its tail into the bottle then brought it out and licked it. He repeated the same steps several times till it was satisfied. The mouse continued in the same way on the following nights till its tail could not reach the remaining oil in the bottom of the bottle. He moved water in its mouth and poured it in the bottle till the remaining oil rose up (as it is lighter than water). So, the mouse was able to withdraw all the oil, leaving only water.



## Eleventh Touch

### The Crow and the Jug

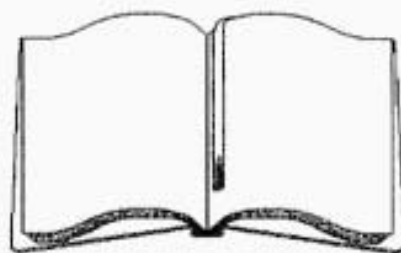
A crow became thirsty one day. It found nothing but a jug of water, but it was not able to drink because the jug's mouth was too narrow. For a while, it thought of a way to reach the water. It started to throw some pebbles into the jug so that the water might rise. So, it finally managed to drink and quench its thirst.



## Chapter Two

### The House Library

Allah, Exalted be He, says:  
﴿Proclaim (or read!) in the Name of  
your Lord and Cherisher Who created.  
Created man, out of a leech-like clot.  
Proclaim! And your Lord is most  
Bountiful. He, who taught you (the use  
of) the pen, taught man that which he  
knew not.﴾



This is the first Surah (chapter) of the Qur'an revealed to Allah's Messenger, (peace be upon him). It directed Allah's Messenger, (peace be upon him), in the very first revelation and in the first step on the path of the Islamic call, to 'read' in the name of Allah: "Proclaim! And your Lord is Most Bountiful."

After this divine order, the following verses reveal the truth about learning. Allah has taught man 'the use of the pen'. The pen was and still is, the most important instrument in conveying knowledge in man's life. This fact is even more obvious now in our present time. Allah, Exalted be He, created the pen and knows its value, so He, the Almighty referred to its importance from the very first revelation He sent down. This beautiful message was the first part of His last message to mankind, even

though the Messenger charged with conveying it was unlettered. The verses also highlight the fact that Allah, Exalted be He, is the source of all knowledge. It is from Allah that man derives all he has learnt and all he is still learning. It is through none but Allah that the secrets of existence, life, and the human self are revealed to man.

Guided by eternal Divine truth, our great scholars throughout history, treaded the path of knowledge and learning. They understood the sanctified position of knowledge, the merit of pious scholars and the importance of books.

On the path of knowledge and learning, the home library plays a pioneering role in spreading knowledge, goodness and guidance. Hence, our great scholars were extremely interested in establishing libraries in their homes. For this purpose, they spared no penny. They devoted the greatest part of their time to learning different fields of knowledge through reading the books they collected for their libraries. Moreover, they wanted these books to be accessed by their children and grand children, so that they would make good use of them in the right path to get closer to Allah, the Almighty. This will be obvious through the following points:

### **Establishing the house library**

In addition to the great knowledge one derives from books, they are the best thing to invest one's money in, the nicest and noblest thing to decorate one's house with, and the wisest and most honest companion one can confide in. Hence, our great scholars were earnest in their attempts to collect books. For example, in his book 'The Hidden Pearls', Ibn Hajar, (may Allah

have mercy upon him), said about Ibn Al-Qayyim, "He was fond of collecting books; he collected a great number of books, so that after his death, his children sold them (the books) for a long time, as well as keeping many for themselves."

In his book, 'Biography of the Noblest Scholars,', Adh-Dhahabi described how Qadi Abdur-Rahim Ibn `Ali Al-Lakhmi was fond of collecting books. He said: "We know that the volumes he had, reached about 100,000 books. He used to collect books from everywhere.

Also, Sheikh Raghīb At-Tabakh, (may Allah have mercy upon him) said, "Sheikh Ahmad An-Najar, the greatest scholar of Aleppo, (may Allah have mercy upon him), was so fond of buying books that when he once saw a new book but he had no money to buy it, he took off some of the clothes he was wearing and sold them so that he could buy the book at once."

### **Making use of the house library**

The great scholars were not only interested in collecting books, but they also made good use of them to cultivate their minds. For instance, 'Ibnul-Jawzy', (may Almighty Allah have mercy upon him), said: "The best way for one to acquire knowledge is to read a great deal of the compilations of the early Muslims. Contemplating their knowledge, wisdom, and noble deeds will incite and encourage one to follow in their footsteps. There is no book but has some benefit. As for myself, I never get bored from reading. Whenever I see a new book, I feel that I have found a treasure. The reader may wonder at knowing what I have read, twenty thousand volumes or even more, and I still have a desire to read more and more. I have made great use of

contemplating the biographies of the righteous and how they were sought to worship Allah and acquire knowledge and wisdom. Those who do not read have missed the chance of enjoying all that I have known."

Moreover, the wife of *Imam Az-Zahri*, (may Allah have mercy upon them), described her husband's fondness of reading saying, "By Allah, such books stir my jealousy more than three other wives would do."

*Imam Ibnu-Jawzy*, (may Allah have mercy upon him), also said, "I know someone who kept to bed because of a severe headache and fever. (During his illness) he put a book near him. When he felt somewhat better, he took to reading the book till fatigue overcame him. One day the physician visited him and saw him like this, so he said, "You cannot do this to yourself, you are endangering your life."

Sulaymanul-'Amir wrote about his keen interest in reading,

A woman said: "You have spent on books

All what your right hand got of money."

I replied: "Let me be! I may find a book

To guide me how to get my record with my right hand.

### **Bequeathing a library to one's children**

Our great scholars were keen to bequeath their libraries with all they contained of knowledge, goodness and guidance to their offspring. By doing so, they realized and followed the *Hadith* that reads, "Scholars are the heirs of the Prophets."



The Prophets did not leave wealth behind them, they left knowledge. So, he who seeks knowledge will gain great benefits.

In this respect, `Abdullah Ibn Salamah reported that his father, Salamah, said, "Abu Budail Ibn Warqaa' gave me a book and said: 'O son, this is Allah's messenger's book. Keep it and adhere to its guidance. You will be good as long as you adhere to it.' Salamah then read the *Hadith* included in that book, which also refers to that which was written by `Ali Ibn Abi Talib, (may Allah be pleased with him)."

In the same concern, Samrah Ibnu Jandab, Abu Dhar, (may Allah have mercy upon him), compiled many *Hadiths* in a volume which his son Sulayman, (may Allah be pleased with him), willed to his children. Ibnu Sireen said about that volume, "Samrah's message to his offspring is full of great knowledge."

### **Our home on the oath of wisdom**

Addressing the Prophet's wives, Allah, Exalted be He, says: ﴿*And recite what is rehearsed to you in your homes of the Signs of Allah and His Wisdom.*﴾ (Al-Ahzab: 48)

There are two important things to contemplate in this verse. The first thing is that having the Qur'an rehearsed in their homes indicates that they were receiving education. The second thing is that Allah ordered them to recite what was rehearsed in their homes. This refers to the fact that they were learning. This should encourage us to organize the process of receiving and imparting knowledge inside our homes.

The Muslim family should set aside time for this purpose. They can make their house into a blessed place, for receiving

and imparting knowledge for their family members. As well as this, they can attend learning sessions held in mosques or with other Muslim families. The point is that all family members, children, men and women should participate in the process of receiving and imparting knowledge. The Muslim family members should be keen to acquire general religious and worldly knowledge. Besides this, they should be interested in acquiring thorough knowledge in their specialized field. Establishing a home library is an important part in achieving this purpose. Reading should be a habit in the Muslim family. There should be an earnest and sincere desire to acquire knowledge.

In this respect, Hassanul-Banna wrote in his essay, 'Bringing up Children on Sheer Islamic Principles,' "The Muslim family should have a home library, even if it is small. The books of this library should be chosen carefully. It should contain books on Islamic history, books on biographies of the early believers, books on ethics and wisdom, books on the Islamic expeditions and conquests and the like. If the Muslim family stores some medicine in the house in case they need to treat some physical disease, they are even more likely to be in need of an Islamic library, to cultivate their minds."

The home library plays an important role in raising, for childhood is the best stage to instill the desire to read and learn. In effect, the reason why many adults have no inclination to read is attributed mainly to the fact that the habit of reading was not instilled into them during their childhood. Establishing a close relationship between children and books is the best way to develop the habit of reading into children.

Hence, children under six years of age, should be encouraged by their family to keep themselves busy with books and reading. When the child lives in a cultural environment and finds that there is a library inside the house and that all his family members and their friends are sincerely interested in reading books and magazines, they will in turn have the desire to acquire knowledge. Thus, it will be easier for the son to follow in the footsteps of his father.

This fact is further stressed by Sheikh `Ali At-Tantawi when he spoke about his childhood amidst a cultural environment saying, "During my childhood, I used to see some bearded sheikhs wearing turbans coming to our house in the morning. They were my father's companions and friends, who were the most learned men of that time. They used to exchange knowledge reading aloud. While I was serving them tea and water, I used to pick up some words, whose meaning I did not know. Then my father used to ask me to hand him books from our home library, such as 'Comments of Ibnu `Abdeen,' 'Indian *Fatwas*' or a dictionary. In this way I knew the titles of many books.

Sometimes my father would take me with him to visit some of his learned students or companions, During these visits, I used to listen without uttering a word. I used to sit unnoticed by anyone, but I was like a recorder. I used to record every word I heard. When I went to primary school, I received such knowledge that no longer exists in our schools. I used to read books that no pupil in the same stage with me could read. If I am to tell the reader about the names of the books that I read when I was six years old, he may not believe it. I read tens of books on science and history. For example, I read stories of `Antarah, King Sayf and stories of knights and heroes.

My family had a rich library. During my leisure time, I used to choose some book from it. If I found it interesting, I would read it; if I could not understand it or if I found it boring, I would replace it but only after its name and the name of its author had stuck to my mind.

### **We are worthier to get wisdom**

The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), said: *"Wisdom is what true believers seek; so, wherever they find it, they are worthier to get it."* Reported by At-Tirmidhi.

Following this honorable Prophetic guidance, we should drink from the fountains of wisdom. Wherever we find wisdom and whatever shape it takes, we Muslims are the worthiest of it.

The subject under discussion is about establishing home libraries and how to develop the habit of reading in children. There are many good examples to consider and follow in this concern.

For example, France has established 'Pleasure Derived from Books' which is an organization for research and media purposes. It aims at actively developing the relation between children and books by holding meetings, conferences and periodical training sessions, as well as answering the questions sent by fax. In addition, it issues a critical, media magazine every two months and a series of booklets on the activities of the libraries.

In the same way, Germany holds annual, national reading competitions.. The children participating in these competitions choose texts to read aloud for 3-5 minutes. The competitions are held within a week of the child receiving the book.

Also, in Japan, there is a non-governmental movement under the name 'Literature Store.' This word is used by the Japanese people to refer to establishing small libraries for children. According to this movement someone, usually the provider of a family, invites the neighborhood children to his house on a weekly basis, usually on Sunday afternoons and places his own collection of children's books at their disposal. They can take these books to their houses to read themselves or let others read them. This kind of library is managed by one person and is called 'The Family Library.' This is a step better than lending books only to one's friends with whom one wishes to share the pleasure of reading.

Along the same lines, Japan launches a campaign under the slogan 'A book in every home.' The Japanese noticed that the main reason why country people, especially children, are not interested in reading is because they cannot afford to buy the books. Hence, some schools and libraries in the countryside have organized a campaign with the slogan 'A book in every home.'

In this respect, Dr. Muhammadul-Wahabi, an author and pediatrician, was quoted as saying: "One day, while I was returning from the Netherlands to Belgium by train, I sat beside a Netherlander lady with a little child. Suddenly, the child burst out crying. The mother opened her bag and took a book from it and gave it to the child, who became absorbed in reading it and stopped weeping altogether. I wondered at that situation. When the woman opened her bag, I thought she would get out some sweets for the child, but instead, she provided him with something intellectual. That intellectual provision is what our children need most."

Another example in this regard is set to us from Turkey. Sheikh Najib Khalidul-`Amir discussed this issue saying, "I went to Turkey in the summer of 1408 after *Hijra*. I remember that we paid a visit to some region, which had a magnificent view indicating the greatness of the Creator, Exalted be He. The landscape with all its greenery was like a great green carpet. The great trees were wavering in the gentle breeze. We stopped the car and got out. I noticed a young boy about 13 years old sitting in a car completely absorbed in reading a book, in spite of the fact that all the people there were out enjoying the fascinating view and the sweet breeze. We spent nearly an hour enjoying the scenery, and then we returned to the car. To my wonder, the young boy was still reading!"

Reading is the key to building great civilizations. Through reading, Muslims can acquire knowledge about their religion. He who doesn't read is an enemy to himself, because he stands still while others progress. We live in the age of information. So we should not make foolish excuses like, "We don't have enough time to read; we are too busy." With all the labour saving devices of our age, like washing machines, cars, and so on, time is in our hands and books are available. Hence, we should develop an interest in reading, so we can progress.

### **A book that opened the fountain of goodness**

A certain book may by Allah's will, open the fountains of goodness within a child's heart that can help him to be more established in faith, truthfulness and striving in Allah's cause. This may also reflect onto other people and guide them to the right path. In this regard, the modest Islamic caller `Abdul-Hassan `Ali An-Nadawi said in his book 'The Way to

Madeenah,' under the chapter of 'the book whose merit I will never forget; a journey into the Prophetic biography during my childhood,' "I will now discuss the book whose benefit was and still is great to me. I always ask Allah, Exalted be He, to have mercy upon its author who has given me through this book a gift that I consider the best thing to me after faith, or, in other words, a part of my faith. This book is 'The Biography of the Mercy sent to the Worlds,' by Al-Qadi Muhammad Sulaymanul-Mansur Fawzy, (may Allah have mercy upon him). The way I obtained this book was rather strange. My eldest brother, may Allah have mercy upon him, had the responsibility of bringing me up after my father's death. My brother carefully provided me with the books that I should read during my childhood. The first book he brought to me was 'Biography of the Best Human Being' by an Indian author. My brother was keen on making me read a lot about the biography of the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), because he was certain that this would be the most important factor in establishing faith and morals in one's heart. Hence, I was brought up to respect the books written about the biography of the Prophet and to be keen on obtaining and reading them. Sadly, my brother died when I was just nine years of age. I used then to peruse advertisements for books, and one day I saw one for the book, 'The Biography of the Mercy Sent to the Worlds.' I sent a letter to the publisher to buy the book by mail. This book was printed in two volumes and a 10 or 11 year old child like me could not afford the set.. But children, especially at that time, never submitted to the laws of economy; they knew nothing but what they wanted. The mailman came with the book I asked for. I stood still and silent, knowing I had no money to pay for it. My mother, may Allah have mercy upon

her, was keen to please her orphan child, but she had no money at that time to buy him the book, so she apologized to the mailman. I thought for a while and I did not find a better intercession for me than that used by the young Companion `Umair Ibnu Abi Waqqas with the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), to allow him to participate in the Battle of Badr, that is, the intercession of innocent tears. Such innocent intercession is always accepted by Allah, Exalted be He, and by His righteous slaves. Such was the case with my mother. My entreaty touched her heart and she did her best to buy me that book. Well, finally I got the book!

I started reading it. It really had a great and tender influence on me. Its effect was not like the enthusiasm felt when one reads about the lives of great conquerors and champions. Reading about the life of the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), is totally different. It inspires unparalleled spiritual comfort in the reader.

I found myself deeply attached to that book. It seemed as if it had been written particularly for me. I felt a strange pleasure in reading it. It was a kind of pleasure different from all the pleasures I knew in my childhood. Reading it purified my feelings. I wondered at this. It was not like the pleasure a child derives from having a delicious meal when hungry or having a holiday after a busy, tiring year of studying; nor was it like the pleasure a child finds in playing or having won a match; nor was it similar to the pleasure one feels on visiting an old friend or receiving a generous visitor. It was not like any of those pleasures. It was something I felt but could not describe. I confess that I cannot describe it until now. All I can say about



this is that it was a kind of spiritual pleasure. Who can say that children do not experience spiritual pleasures! By Allah, children are spiritually purer than others, and their feelings are truer than theirs, even if they fail to express themselves.

Through this book, I knew about the early Qurayshite believers who received severe kinds of torture (at the hands of the unbelievers) but bore them patiently with firm faith, and moreover, with pleasure. Then, I felt a kind of pleasure that has never been experienced by the rich and the strong and many of those who are referred to as happy in this life; such kind of pleasure is only experienced by he who defends the right and those who are persecuted because of his faith and striving in Allah's cause. This pleasure is not to be compared with that of power and victory. On reading about this, I yearned to experience this kind of pleasure, even once in my lifetime.

I also read the story of the Prophet's *Hijra*. I have never read a more interesting and well presented story. The author undertook his task simply and honestly. According to this story, the Madinite followers were eagerly waiting for the Prophet's arrival. When he entered Madeenah, the tribes, one by one, vied to invite him to their homes saying, "Alight here, O Messenger of Allah, for we have strength and protection for you." But he, (peace and blessings be upon him), who is dearer to me than my parents, said, "Let her (his she-camel) go its way, for she is commanded by Allah..." So the camel moved onward till she stopped before the house which is the site of the Prophetic Mosque until now. And thus, Allah, Exalted be He, willed that the noblest honor of receiving the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), be conferred on Abu Ayyubul-Ansari, (may Allah

be pleased with him). Hence, Abu Ayyub carried the Prophet's luggage into his house. I read how deeply Abu Ayyub was pleased with that Divine blessing bestowed by Allah on him and how faithful and generous he was in serving the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him).

While reading this, I felt as if my heart had departed from my body and accompanied the Prophet's mount upon entering Madeenah. I felt as if I was seeing all this with my own eyes. All that I had read about the lives of kings and great people was nothing in comparison with this. I forgot all signs of love and faithfulness shown by man to man, remembering only that image of peerless love shown by the people of Madina for the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him).

I read also the story of the Battle of Uhud. History never knew a greater and nobler example and portrayal of truthfulness, honesty, heroism, and faith like that of the Prophet's Companions during that battle. I was deeply moved by the attitude of Anas Ibnun-Nadhr, who shouted at those defeatist Muslims, who threw down their swords thinking that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), had been killed, "What will you do in life after him? Adhere to the principles of Allah's Messenger, (peace and blessings be upon him), until death."

I also greatly admired the attitude of the Companion who said, "I feel the smell of Paradise coming from behind Uhud." This Companion's last wish was to die between the feet of Allah's Messenger, (peace and blessings be upon him). Thus, while he was dying, he was carried to Allah's Messenger, (peace and blessings be upon him), and then died between his blessed feet.

The most outstanding example of showing faithfulness to Allah's Messenger, (peace and blessings be upon him), was set by Ábu Dujanah, who shielded the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), with his body, while arrows kept hitting him in his back. I read many other examples of showing true love for the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him). Throughout reading this book. I was sometimes overcome with tears, and sometimes overwhelmed with joy!

## **Our Library... The Question which Occupies the Minds of Parents**

Most parents believe in the importance of a library in the house, for it helps in bringing their children on a religious, scientific and cultural bases.



Some parents try hard to accomplish this goal. Therefore, they are not only keen on establishing this library but also to select suitable collections of books and update their library from time to time. However, there is a question that preoccupies the minds of most parents and educators namely how can we make the best use of the house library in an aesthetic way?

To answer this question in a positive and effective manner, we will present a set of practical methods and means that will be, Allah willing, of use in providing our children with the utmost benefit from the house library.

We invoke Allah, the Almighty to make us among His sincere and successful devotees....Amen.

### **1- A child's library**

Naturally, a child has a tendency to collect and save things, he has the desire to possess. In order to guide this inclination and desire, we should encourage our children and even help

them to own a library, which will be their private possession. In this way, the feeling of appreciating a book will grow inside a child, and such feelings will make him preserve the books from damage. The child will not allow any one to damage his book.

So let us make our children start forming their own library.

Establishing a library for our children might seem trivial to us yet it is of great importance and consequence to them and they in turn will try to improve it.

Nonetheless, one should not think that having a library is costly, or that it should occupy a whole room. Many libraries were first established in boxes, then on a desk, then afterwards they grew and became great.

In this context, another question arises (1) how can we choose suitable books for our children? (2) the scholars of education are the best to answer this question. They say that in order that the objectives of establishing a house library for children can be obtained, there are certain points that have to be taken into consideration such as:

### **First: The topics**

The topics should suit the child's needs and experience. They should also suit their level of perception. As well as this, the subject of the book should present interesting material to the children. (Note: what interests adults does not necessarily interest the children).

### **Second: Style**

The style should be in the form of direct sentences, and paragraphs should be short. Difficult styles should be avoided.

The style should stimulate the child's imagination and way of thinking.

### **Third: Vocabulary**

Books for children should use the most commonly used Arabic lexicon (i.e. Standard Arabic *fusha*). New words should be introduced in sentences that are familiar to the child, because this will enable the child to understand them. In order to present new words to a child's mind, they should be repeated in varied styles. Each page should not include more than 2 new words, and each new word should be repeated more than fifteen times at later stages. It is important to note that using many new words in a work distracts the child.

### **Fourth: Handwriting**

A book should be typed in big, bold print, according to the child's age in each stage.

### **Fifth: Illustrations**

A book should contain attractive drawings and pictures with bright colors in order to attract the child's attention.

Parents should not forget that reading the book before presenting it to their children is important. This is because some books may appear to be attractive while they contain some inappropriate topics.

Also, viewing a book before presenting it to a child prepares parents to discuss it with their children. This will also highlight positive and negative points in a book, as well as improving a child's ability to understand. A child might ask a clever question about the book, so understanding the contents of the book in

advance enables the parents to give appropriate answers to these questions.

## **2- The picture story**

There is no doubt that when a child discovers the fine and interesting sides of the story he will like the book he reads. Moreover, he will be eager to learn how to read and practice reading as well.

Thus, reading picture stories with a child is what helps him acquire new linguistic skills. The pictures that are presented with the story gives the child an idea about what the narrator is trying to convey. A researcher named Tina Bruse confirms this fact, she says, " Reading starts by listening to stories and stories have a special way of using the language that is called (Book Language). Besides, children need to increase their knowledge in (Book Language) before knowing how to read, and before becoming enthusiastic readers".

"The best way to read picture stories to children is by placing the child on his mother's lap or his father's. When a mother places her child on her lap, she surrounds him with her arms. This enables the child to review the book pictures with his parents. Moreover, it is important for a teacher to point at the words to the child with his fingers while reading.

In the preschool years, although a child does not know how to read, he can still discover some meanings. In this way, a child will be familiar with black letters, which are printed under or beside the pictures and his mother or father points at those letters while reading. In addition, he will know that words are written from right to left and from up to down. "

While reading stories to children, parents must avoid reading quickly in order to avoid children getting bored. This is similar to a person who tries to listen to a foreign language, where he finds the difficulty a child faces when he tries to understand something being read rapidly.

Thus, while reading one has to express himself slowly and he should change the tone of his voice from time to time.

Reading and narrating require effort from parents in order to master this art.

When a child improves his reading skills, he can participate with the parents in reading the story, or he can read it himself with the help of his parents. He can also narrate it. Yet parents have to clarify whatever may be unclear. Doing so has a positive impact and several educational benefits.

Consequently, this shows us the importance of picture stories for children. Reading to a child, even twice a week will have a positive result in developing a child's abilities, imagination creativity and culture. Allah willing.

### **3- An album**

When a child is interested in reading, then he will also be interested in the topic of the book. So, parents should try keep their children interested in the book, and make them used to spending time reading it. This is done through offering them books that contain picture of animals and birds their child likes.

There is a magical interaction and an interesting communication between the child and a picture. When a child looks at it carefully, it conveys to him the beauty of nature and



Allah's Creation. It influences the child and he starts to express his feelings towards it through description.

From here the language of pictures encourages children to read and write.

It also makes children, as well as grown-ups think deeply.

Concerning this point, scholars of education have to be mentioned here, among those scholars is Paulina Kargo Mard. She says, "No doubt pictures push a child to speak. All parents were asked by their children about a picture book. Surely, parents make their child happy when they bring him a picture book.

Through our experience we come to know that pictures should be available for children where they can see them, and hold them in their hands."

Another view from a French scholar is that, "Children enjoy looking at colorful books, so provide your child with such books and sit with them placing him beside you or on your lap, then start looking at the colorful book. Try to ask the child about the picture and what people or animals are doing, because being acquainted with pictures and explaining them is the first step in learning to read."

It is beneficial for the child to prepare his album as long as we provide him with picture books.

How is this done? Parents should encourage their children and help them to cut out pictures from old books, newspapers, magazines, or even special attractive and natural pictures. After that, parents should provide their children with a note book to put his pictures in. They could call it 'The valley of contemplation'.

Then they can put in it the library and whenever parents find beautiful pictures, they can cut them out and put them with others like it. It is preferable to categorize pages according to the type of the picture.i.e. flowers can be put together, birds together and fruits on another page and so on.

'The valley of contemplation' has a pivotal importance for it makes a child interested in books and magazines. When a child starts to search for beautiful pictures, he becomes more attached to books and grows to like them more and more. In addition, children should get used in cutting out pictures themselves. Parents should work on how to offer positive feedback to their children's efforts and learn to make appropriate remarks when they see the pictures. This makes them more interested to work.

It also makes them accustomed to a certain order, which is a cornerstone in education and bringing up children."

#### **4- Books of games**

Children have a hierarchy of needs and their need to play is one of the most important, so playing should be a high priority for them. Therefore it is necessary that parents employ this desire in their children, to encourage them to love reading and learning.

Before a child can successfully learn to read, he should explore the world of books. In this way, his senses and imagination will develop and he will become aware that books are either made of cloth or paper and contain either cartoons or pictures. The child will learn to respect books and so they will be cared for as the child handles them. The child will discover pop-up books and other kinds that make sounds when they are

opened. The child will be attracted by books with clear, colorful pictures.

When a child grows up and starts reading he should have collected various kinds of books that are related to games, puzzles and competitions, as well as religions, cultural and mathematical books, e.g. 'Smart Rest House,' 'The journey of games' and 'Who is he?'

Books like these contain various kinds of games and competitions that are beneficial, whether we read them to the child or he reads them himself.

Competitions can be conducted in a family gatherings or the child can make them with his friends.

### **5- An Islamic nasheed (short rhymed songs) book**

Children enjoy hearing rhythmic phrases, rhymed children songs and hidden melody and they like to repeat rhythmic expressions....."

Parents can employ this means in encouraging children to read by giving them books that contain rhymed and/or rhythmic songs, poems, expressions etc. Parents can also sing to them and can read literary examples to their children, whether poetry or prose. Anything we share with the children should suit the children's ability and interest. If you find that the child is bored with one particular kind, then switch to a shorter and easier one and work your way up.

It is important for a child to hear different kinds of writing that appeals to him even if he doesn't understand all he hears.

As the child learns to listen to and understand poetry, his feelings and emotions will become more sensitive and his vocabulary will increase."

When a mother chooses a book or magazine from the library, then she uses it to read, sing or play with the child, he will become more attached to the book because it provides him with what he likes the most; namely, singing, playing and sharing with a parent. As a result when a child wants his mother to sing and play with him, he will point to the library and say, "Please mother! Make the book sing."

As time passes and the child learns to read and write, the importance of having a library with carefully selected will become clear. These books enrich the child's literary inclination and develops his taste so he is able to define beauty and search for it. In this way he will become a good reader. This is because his love for reading has increased and he is attached to books. In addition, books occupy a child's spare time, and show his talents in poetry, or prose as well as will enriching and developing his talents and directing them in the right way.

## **6- Reading tests**

Fair and just competition is one of the means to promote a sound and efficient education. The spirit of competition urges a child to exert more effort in order to win the appointed reward.

"Experimental studies have proven the importance of rewards in increasing the child's level of reaction and implanting the lesson to be taught."

It is not necessary to offer a material reward for praising and giving encouragement are also sufficient."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) used the reward system in competitions to encourage children and implant teachings in them. The prophet (peace be upon him) used to tell children, *"The one who wins will have a reward."* So the children used rush to the prophet (peace be upon him) as he took them and kissed them.

Competitions in reading can be carried out in various ways, for instance parents can ask children to read, then they introduce a text that suits their abilities and interest, then they can ask children to read a paragraph aloud, and evaluate their skills depending on grammatical knowledge, correct pronunciation, and the child's style of reading. The winner will receive a suitable reward. This kind of competition can be made among the children of a family, or between friends, relatives and neighbors. Moreover, they can be carried out at specific times.

Reading aloud in competitions is important because it is useful for children to read songs, poetic stories and plays out loud as it makes children develop a literary taste, improves their pronunciation, expression and delivery. Reading aloud also makes parents aware of the children's mistakes in pronunciation, so they can assist them to read fluently and to articulate words correctly.

## **7- Importance of having an example in reading**

It is natural for a child to imitate his parents, elder siblings and teachers in the way they eat, drink, talk and walk etc. etc

Thus, when a child grows up among them and finds them interested in reading books, then he will automatically be interested in reading.

The best example is in what Al-Hafiz Az-Zahaby translated from Abu Hatim Ar-Razy where he says that Abu Hatim said, "Abu Zar'a told me: "I've never seen a keener person on listening to stories like you." So I said to him, "My son Abdur-Rahman is keener than me," he replied. "Like father like son.". Ar-Ramam (one of the narrators) said, "I asked Abur-Rahman (Abu 'Asim's son) about his and his father's eagerness to listen to stories. He said, "When he eats I read for him, when he enters the latrine I read for him, and when he enters the house for any reason I read for him."

### **A Message to Parents**

Dear loving and caring father,

Whenever the child finds you busy reading a book, he will ask you what you are doing?

He will ask you if he can be like you and own books too?

This will encourage you to make a place in your library for your child, and read him the books he likes, and narrate stories to him that he finds interesting.

Someone who is interested in children's literature says, "My daughter has grown up seeing my library, which I prepared and to which used to add. She used to come near me while I was reading a book, and I would observe her curiosity. She would be wondering about me and what I was doing and would often ask me about it so I made a special part in my library to put books and games for her.

## **8- A place for creativity**

When we try to find new and creative mans to raise our children, with sincere intentions and belief in Allah, then we must be sure that Allah will guide us to the best new way to achieve this honorable goal. Among such means we find the following:-

### **First: The valley of ideas**

It is a private notebook where a child records his ideas throughout the day, and he can keep it among his books in the library. The valley of ideas is especially important as it is a means of recording the child's ideas and the adults around him can take note of his development.

From time to time parents can choose the best notebook of ideas and give a reward to the winner. Moreover parents should bear in mind that the more the child grows the more his ideas become mature.

### **Second: The best chosen words copybook**

It is a private notebook for each child, where they write down the best words they encounter while reading a Qur'anic verse, or prophetic *Hadith*, a wise saying... etc, Parents should periodically evaluate this notebook and give the child a fitting reward. Children can exchange notebooks.. It will be a valuable possession when the child grows up and can look back on his memories and collection of words!

### **Third: Visiting someone's library**

Children can visit the library of one of their relatives or friends, where they can discover when he first started it, its

contents and the best items in it. He can read something from it to the child.

#### **Fourth: Choosing the best library**

We have mentioned before the importance of a child's library, which he maintains himself. Parents can hold a competition between the children's libraries to see the one which has the most useful content and is organized in the best way.

Competitions can be held between the children of the same family, or those of the neighbors, relatives or friends. The winner will receive a prize. This could be done once a year.

#### **Finally, dear loving and caring parents,**

Let's be enthusiastic and build this library, utilizing it in a way that will serve in raising our children. If this action is done sincerely for Allah, it will be rewarded. It will show that you did the best you can in raising your children on the best morals, ethics, knowledge and understanding.

**Allah is the best Guide.**



## Chapter Three

### Occasions

In our daily life, we are continually confronting situations and events that can be used to inculcate many good values, and religious and educational principles in the souls of our children. A good instructor always makes use of events he might face, so as to convey a message to his students or followers. This makes the principle or the value become deep rooted in the heart of the person receiving guidance, because this training is related to what is seen and heard. In addition, the person will never get bored; rather, communication between the instructor and the student will be facilitated and hence new thoughts and ideas will refresh the minds.

It is very important to reflect on the way the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), used to raise children.

At the table: `Umarubn Salamah, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: "I was a young child being brought up under the care of the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him). When we were eating, I used to eat from the far side of the plate. The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), commented, '*O young boy! Mention the Name of Allah, use your right hand (i.e. for eating) and eat from the side of the plate that is near to you.*'" (Reported by Ibnu Majah)

Entering the house and leaving it: Anas, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: "When I was in the service of the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), I used to enter the house without asking for permission. The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), said, '*Stop my son! There has occurred a matter. Do not enter without asking for permission!*'" Anas also reported that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), as having said: "*Son! When you enter your own house, greet your family, for this brings about blessings for both you and them.*"

Passing by young boys: Both Al-Bukhari and Muslim reported that Anas, (may Allah be pleased with him), passed by a group of young boys and he greeted them and said: "The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), used to do this." Imam Muslim reported in another narration: "The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), passed by a group of young boys and greeted them." Ibn As-Sunni's narration reads: "He said to a group of boys which he passed, '*Peace be upon you young boys!*'"

Upon climbing a mount (also means of transportation): `Abdullah ibn `Abbas, (may Allah be pleased with them), said: "One day I was behind the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), and he said to me: 'Young man, I shall teach you some words (of advice): *Be mindful of Allah and He will protect you. Be mindful of Allah and you will find Him close to you. If you need anything, ask Him; if you seek help, seek help of Him. Be sure that if the nation were to unite together for your benefit, it would benefit you only with what Allah has already prescribed for you, and that if it were to gather together to harm you, it would harm you only with what He had already ordained for you. What Allah has decided will surely take place.*'" Reported by At-Tirmidhi, who classified it as a sound and authentic *Hadith*.

## Great Occasions and Deliberate Negligence

There are various events such as falling ill, death and the like that greatly affect our lives. However, there is a prevalent idea among parents that a child should be kept away from participating in these events. Their excuse is that their child is still young and should be saved from these things. Even in case they are forced to let their child participate in such events, this participation is always limited. In their way of thinking, it is the best way to behave at such times. However, the Prophet (peace and blessing be upon him), highlighted the importance of children's participation in such events and how these events could be utilized to teach them good religious lessons.

For the benefit of parents, we are going to cite some events and follow them with a description of how can they be used to make children familiar with the morals and values of each occasion.

**Visiting an ill person:** When visiting someone who is ill, mothers often say : "I am going to visit someone who is ill, so I cannot take you with me. You stay at home and enjoy playing with your toys till I come back !" These words teach the



child to be selfish as she encourages him to fulfill his desire of playing and preferring it to visiting an ill person. Needless to say that feelings of sympathy are eradicated and feelings for the pains and sufferings of others are kept far from the heart of the child. The child learns to take care of himself only. In order to avoid all these moral diseases of the hearts, parents are bound to realize that visiting an ill person is one of the important social values to which they should pay due attention and on which they should raise their children, so that the child is trained to practice it at the very early age. Feeling the value of others should run deep in the heart of a child from his earliest days and should become part and parcel of their character. This will lead them to fulfill their duties towards others, and share their happiness and sorrows. This is indeed the main objective of the teachings of Islam that aim at promoting acts of goodness, principles of virtue and habits of morality in each and every member of society.

Giving us the best example in this regard, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), demonstrated unprecedented care in implanting this noble social moral in the hearts and the minds of the young. He, (peace and blessings be upon him), is reported to have taken Usama ibnu Zayd with him while he was visiting a sick person. Al-Bukhari reported on the authority of `Urwah, that Usama ibnu Zayd, (may Allah be pleased with him), told him that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), put the saddle from Fadak on his donkey, rode it and placed Usama on his back and they went to pay a visit to Sa`d ibnu `Ubadah before the battle of Badr."

On another occasion, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), aroused the feelings of mercy in the heart of one of

his young servants. Al-Bukhari reported that Anas, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: "A young Jewish servant of the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), fell ill. The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), paid him a visit to the ill boy and sat by his head and said: '*Embrace Islam!*' The father of the boy said (to his son): 'Obey Abal-Qasim (i.e. the Prophet). The boy accepted Islam forthwith. Upon leaving, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), was heard to say, '*Praise be to Allah, Who has saved him from Hell-Fire.*'"

When a young and innocent child, visits others who are ill, great feelings of sympathy and kindness are developed. These feelings will be deepened when people in turn, visit him with feelings of love and sympathy and keeping on imploring Allah for a speedy relief for his sufferings and the pains when he is ill. This will lead him to love them in return, and show mercy to those who show mercy to him. In addition, this will encourage him to offer more acts of charity and goodness, and will unite their hearts in this noble social manner.

**At wedding parties:** A wise father, upon receiving an invitation to a wedding of a relative, a neighbor or a friend, becomes very happy as this will give him a chance to teach his children a new moral value. During the wedding ceremony, the children will have the chance to see many people, listen to friendly chats, and will be exposed to joyful events. This will provide them with feelings of joy and make them feel an important part of the social structure of their community. A good father will gather his family members, specially the children, and tell them about the happy event and ask them to prepare to attend it. Our example is the Prophet, (peace and

blessings be upon him), who saw a group of young boys at a wedding and showed his satisfaction with their attendance. In addition, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), supplicated for the attendants of the wedding. In a chapter entitled 'Wedding,' Al-Bukhari reported on the authority of `Abdul-`Aziz ibnu Suhaib that Anas, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, "The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), saw women and boys coming to the wedding." `Abdul-`Aziz, said I think Anas said: "Whose wedding is this?" The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), stood up and said, "*Indeed, you are the dearest to me, you are the dearest to me, you are the dearest to me,*" ..referring to the Ansar.

The child also has the opportunity to approach the bridegroom and congratulate him saying: "May Allah bless your marriage and overwhelm you with His blessings and tie your hearts together in blessed union." An new husband will respond positively to this. Stressing this meaning, Dr. `Abdullah Nasih `Ulwan states: "Congratulating others on happy events is one of the social manners that are to be observed while raising children. This will inculcate in him the feelings of unity and brotherhood, as well as strengthen his love for all those around him. Since there are many events taking place when people are together, instructors, in general, and parents in particular, should take their students and their children to such events where they offer congratulation to others, so that the young may learn from the old." It is important to note that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), was keen on inculcating the moral of congratulating others in the hearts of the children. Ibnu `Umar, (may Allah be pleased with them), reported that a young boy came to the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him) and

said, "I want to travel to *Hajj*." The Prophet walked with him for a while and said: "*Young boy! May Allah shield you with piety, guide you to what is good and save you from sorrow.*" Upon his return, the boy came to the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), who supplicated for him again and said: "*May Allah accept your pilgrimage, forgive your sin and compensate you for what you have spent.*" Allah's Messenger is always truthful.

**Keeping the ties of kinship:** Anas, (may Allah be pleased with him), reported that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), said, "*Let him who loves his provision to be blessed and his life to be prolonged, keep ties with his relatives.*" (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Some parents use this *Hadith* as a basis to offer good deeds and keep good relations with their relatives. However, sometimes they neglect to take their children with them when paying a visit to a relative. Should one of them be asked about the reason for not allowing his child to accompany him, they say that the children are still too young to realize the importance of the visit and that they want to save time and effort. In addition, they fear that the children may be noisy while in the relative's house.

Such parents make the mistake of underestimating the importance of these visits and neglect the duty of teaching their children to visit their relatives and learn the etiquette of doing so.

It is considered a sign of miserliness that a parent deprives his child from learning to perform that good deed. At-Tirmidhi reported that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), said, "*He who guides someone to an act of goodness will be rewarded as equally as the person who does the deed himself.*"

A parent is disloyal to his children in such a case, as the child is a trust, which the parent has the responsibility to preserve and keep. At-Tabarani reported, with authentic transmission, that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), said, *"Learn from your relatives what leads you to keep your ties of kinship, for keeping relations disseminates the feeling of love among the members of the same family, increases the property and prolongs the span of one's life."* Children are to be taught the principle of keeping and maintaining relations with their kinsmen.

When parents neglect this duty, they underestimate the repercussions in the future, for if children are trained to pay visits to their relatives, their feeling of belonging will be strengthened, despite any noise they might make. Their visits will result in on-going love and a strong sense of belonging. In Islam, a small harm is endured in order to attain a greater benefit.

Based on the above mentioned points, it is safely said that among the good things a father and a mother should concentrate on, when raising their child, is taking him to pay visits to relatives so the child will learn to keep good relations and realize the importance of adhering to this great virtue. Love will be implanted in the heart of a child for his relatives, in particular, and to people in general. During this delicate stage of a child's life, he will not only be trained inside the house but outside as well. It is possible to leave the child stay for a night at a relative's house (i.e. aunt's or uncle's), for this will make it clear to him that the residents of these houses are related and that his family perimeter is much wider than his own home. Al-Bukhari reported from Ibn`Abbas, (may Allah be pleased with him), as having said: "I spent a night at the house of my



aunt Maymunah. In the evening, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), came and asked, *'Has the boy performed prayer?'* As they answered in the affirmative, he went to bed."

## **Childish Situations and Educational Mistakes**

There are many parents, who are known for their desire to make use of the situations their children face to teach them correct moral and religious behavior. In the meantime, they get preoccupied with simply reacting against some normal childish actions that they think need to be corrected. Continually focusing on negative behavior is a grave educational mistake. It also acts at widening the gap between parents and children and leaves a very bad impression on the child and harms his feelings.

These recurrent situations will be discussed, in brief, in the following lines. We will try to suggest some more positive courses of action to be adopted by parents in such situations and how they can be utilized for educational purposes.

### **Drawing and scribbling on the wall**

These acts are a source of joy and great happiness for the child. When scribbling on a wall or furniture, a child is putting into practice his natural sense of innocence, purity and simplicity. When he grows older, these things will act as happy memories. This seemingly meaningless scribble will be very meaningful and dear to him. In addition, this scribbling was the first step for many painters and writers. The walls of their own houses witnessed the first strokes of their brushes. However,

these childish drawings and scribble deface the wall and need to be cleaned. Then what should we do? Should we punish the child so that he never repeats his misdeed? Shall we give him the freedom to do this all over the house?

Let's look at the following example to find a suitable solution to this problem.

A woman saw her child drawing on the wall of his room. Her first reaction was to frown and then she became furious to an extent that the child was frightened of her and his heart jumped into his mouth. She was not satisfied with this. She went to the extent of slapping the boy. At this point, dislike began to creep into the child's heart and he became angry with his mother.

The woman could have responded to the situation in a different way. She could have said something like, "Baby! You should not have done this! It makes the wall dirty and everyone is unhappy. Come and take this sketch book and draw your nice pictures in here, and I will pick some and hang them on the wall to decorate it. Isn't that better?" Without any hesitation, the mother should begin cleaning the walls. The child will be touched by his mother and show his appreciation for her positive reaction by saying, "I love you mom!"

Isn't it better to give your child a sketch book to draw in and thereby record his work that will later be hung on the wall on which he had previously drawn? In addition, his work may be presented to relatives and friends and the child's happiness will be great as he receives praise and thanks, and of course some lovely presents, for his beautiful art work.

This kind of considerate treatment for the feelings of the child will encourage and enable him to express his power of

creativity and natural talents. Elaborating to this meaning, Sheikh `Ali At-Tantawi, may he rest in peace, stated, " Once I read in a famous English magazine that some English men of letters were asked about the thing on which the growth and flourishing of sciences and arts depend. There was a great prize for the best answer. The winner was a well renowned English writer whose answer was: 'It is encouragement.' She further added, 'Having reached this elevated status and achieved this wide fame, she is still in need of a word of encouragement to move forward, for a negative word brings about backwardness.'"

### **Fuss and noise**

Naturally, we desire sleep when we feel tired so that we can be fresh again and have the ability to resume work, but what would you do if you want to rest but the child is making so much noise that you are unable to take a nap?

A mother might get furious and shout at her child, "Be quiet! Stop all this fuss and noise! Let us have some rest!" After this harsh treatment, a child will have no choice but to surrender to his mother's will. However, to him there are no valid reasons for not allowing him to play as he desires.

Another mother might turn to her child and say: "My dear! Would you please lower your voice, for we are really exhausted and need to rest so we can continue working later. " Here, the case is different, for the child will act positively. The child feels at peace because he has not been forbidden to play, but merely to lessen the amount of noise. In addition, the mother has clarified the reason why she wants him to lower his voice and pause for some time.

It is important to note that when a mother is careful in choosing her words when dealing with her children, she indirectly teaches them politeness in addressing others. The mother who yells and says things like, "Shut up! You beast! " will teach her child nothing better than indecent words and an impolite manner of speech. Even while feeling angry, a mother should hide her anger and show kindness. She may say for example: "Wait my dear. Be patient!" Our pious Ancestors were known for giving their children sweet names as a way of winning their hearts. In a *Hadith*, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), is reported to have called a young boy, "*Abu `Umair! What about the Nughayr (a small bird)!*" This will curb the use of calling bad names among children. Instead, their talk will be characterized with pure and decent words.

It was the trait of the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), to be very kind and gentle when treating children. Abu Dawud reported that Anasubn Malik, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: "The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), was the best example of morals. One day, he sent me on some errand. I said: 'I will not go.' However, I said in myself: 'I will go.' When I went out, I found some boys playing, so I stood to watch them for a while. Suddenly, I found someone holding me by the back of my head. It was the Prophet. When I turned around, I found him laughing and he said to me: 'Unais! Now go and do what I have asked you to do!' I responded: 'No sooner said than done, O Messenger of Allah!'"

### **Disobeying parents and showing reluctance**

Having an obedient child is the desire of many parents. Most parents complain of their children's disobedience, so the

question arises concerning what parents should do if their orders are not obeyed.

Unfortunately, most parents confront disobedience with blaming and slandering the child. Often they go to the extent of seeking curses on their disobedient child thinking that this will solve the problem. On the contrary, this kind of behavior usually makes matters worse and adds insult to injury. The simple reason behind this is that the course of action they have adopted is totally incompatible with the teachings of Islam. Slandering and calling names, let alone inveighing against the child, are all rejected in Islam. The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), is reported as having said, *"Do not supplicate against yourselves nor against your children, lest you supplicate at a time when it happens that Almighty Allah accepts supplication (at the same moment) and thus it would be fulfilled."* (Reported by Muslim)

Another group of parents may be negligent towards their children's disobedience, and in so doing, they are indirectly saying to them, "Act as you wish and do whatever you want." Such parents will ultimately regret this course of action when it is too late. Time will pass and the child will grow and one day may direct their bad treatment and slander towards their parents.

The moderate and wise group, however are those parents who follow Prophetic guidance in this concern and take the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), as the real example in treating their children and thus gain peace of mind in addition to their having their children obey them. The above-mentioned incident concerning Anasubn Malik provides a unique way of handling the cases in which children show disobedience and rebellion. Here, we would like to cite another occasion on which

Abdullah ibn Busrah, (may Allah be pleased with him), says, "My mother sent me with a bunch of grapes to the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), but I ate it. When my mother saw the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), she asked him about the grapes. The Prophet said that he had received nothing. Afterwards, whenever he saw me, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), used to say, '*Cheat! Cheat!*'" This was said with the intention of showing him his fault so that he might stop this behavior. They were kind words of reminding and indirect blame.

It is beneficial for both parents and children to adhere to the way of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) when raising their children. Among the lessons to be deduced from these two significant occasions is that, 'A child should not be told all the time that he should be obedient as this might lead him to be a yes-man.' We should give some space to slight acts of disobedience. However, it is important to note that parents have the right to insist on being obeyed, as long as the matter does not involve disobeying Allah.'

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) offered us the perfect remedy for disobedience. At-Tabarani reported that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), said, "*Try to help your children to be grateful. A person can, if he wants, help his child to get rid of his inner inclination to show disobedience.*" We should try to find the reasons behind our children's disobedience and eradicate them.

Ash-Shirbiny and Sadiq pointed out that there are three reasons behind a child's disobedience:

Firstly: If a child really enjoys what he does and is totally absorbed in it, he will refuse any interruption. (e.g. if he is playing with his friends and is called for lunch, he will refuse.)

Secondly: A child may dislike what he is asked to do. For example, he may dislike visiting the doctor, taking his medicine or going to bed at a certain time.

Thirdly: A child may like to see his parents raging with anger due to his actions. This may give him a feeling that he is important. A feeling that perhaps he is not given in a positive way.

The real and lasting solution to the problem involves avoiding the reasons for disobedience. The third reason may be rectified when we pay attention to our children in a positive way and make them feel that we really care for them.

The second reason is treated when we explain to our children the importance of the actions we ask them to do and help them fulfill the tasks we place on their shoulders by offering some words of encouragement and guidance. As for the first reason, it is easily treated when we try to ask them to do something in a way other than mere command. Let us try another way of expressing ourselves. Let us pose the order in the form of a question e.g. "Do you want to eat?" Let us also try to provide options. To exemplify this, we may ask the child, "Do you want to eat now or after five minutes?" In case he chooses to eat after five minutes, we should wait. After five minutes, we should say that it is now time to eat. If he refuses, we can warn him saying, "If you refuse to eat, there will be no bed time story tonight." In case he insists on refusing, we can bring him to the table kindly, not harshly. At the same time, we should stand by our threat of



not reading him a bedtime story. This is necessary so that the child takes us seriously when we speak to him.

## A Prophetic Call Turned Into Practice

In his *Mustadrak*, Al-Hakim reported that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), admonished a man saying, "*Make use of five things before another five overwhelm you: your youth before you get old, your health before you fall ill, your wealth before you become poor, your leisure time before you become busy and your life before death overcomes you.*"

At-Tirmidhi reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah, (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), said: "*Offer good deeds as soon as possible, for seven things may hinder you; poverty that makes you forget, richness that makes you feel arrogant, stinginess that corrupts your souls, old age that makes one feeble, death that overcomes the souls, the Antichrist which is the worst to be awaited and expected, or the Day of Judgment which will be even more wretched and more bitter.*"

These two Prophetic *Hadiths* convey a message to all members of the Muslim nation; young and old, or rich and poor, to rush to offer good deeds and make use of this present life and dedicate it to the obedience of Allah before it is too late to regret.

This reflects the great keenness of our pious predecessors in making the best use of their time; every second of it.

Al-Hasanul-Basri says, "O son of Adam! Your lifetime consists of specific days, when a day ends, then part of your lifetime ends. Of course, the vanishing of some parts leads to the vanishing of the whole. You know this fact indeed, so do good deeds." Bishrubn Al-Harith used to say, "Yesterday is over, today is about to pass and tomorrow is still unborn. Offer good deeds." In his letter to his son counseling him, *Imam Ibnul-Gawzy* wrote: "O son! Days consist of hours, hours are comprised of breaths and each breath is a treasure. Therefore, be cautious and make use of each breath in doing good, otherwise you will have an empty treasury on the day of Judgment. In the *Hadith*, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), states, '*In Paradise, a palm-tree will be for him who says, 'Glory and praise be to Allah the Most Glorious.'*' Ponder, O son, the more time one passes in vain, the more palm-trees he will miss in Paradise."

In his brilliant letter 'Dear Son,' the eminent Muslim scholar *Imam Abu Hamidul-Ghazaly* wrote to his students, "Be of a high aspiring soul, an ever-defeated whim and a body that expects death, for your final resting place is surely your grave. The people of the graves expect you at any moment. Beware! Don't get there without having provision. (i.e. good deeds)."

Based on this great Prophetic call and the practice of our pious predecessors, we are going to mention some recurrent and non-recurrent events and show how such events can be used by the parents in raising their children and providing them with good morals and noble traits.

**May Allah help us all in this regard! Amen!**

## Firstly: Daily Activities

### (1) Eating

#### **Morals**

- 1- Teaching the child the morals and etiquette of eating at a certain time. This is done in an atmosphere of complete kindness. Among the etiquette of eating are the following:
  - a- Mentioning the Name of Allah and the supplication before eating.
  - b- Using the right hand.
  - c- Eating from the food that is nearest to you.
  - d- Not rushing to eat.
  - e- Eating with calmness not greed.
  - f- Washing hands before and after the meal.
  - g- Chewing food well.
  - h- Keeping clothes clean.
  - i- Praising Allah for His provision.
  - j- Not describing the food in a negative way.
  - k- Chatting while eating.
- 2- Training him to eat plain food at times.

- 3- Getting the child to offer some food to his neighbor.
- 4- Giving some food to the poor.
- 5- Helping his mother in cooking, presenting the food and washing the dishes.
- 6- Not eating food in the street.
- 7- All family members gather at the table and wait for the absent member till he/she arrives.
- 8- Raising some questions regarding eating. Why do we eat? Who gives us food? What will happen if there is no food?

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- Through such moral training, a child will learn some great values:
  - a- Feeling close to Allah, the Almighty, mentioning His Name at the beginning of every action and praising Him for His favors.
  - b- Following the exact practices of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him ) and thus loving him.
  - c- Striving to be clean, kind and calm.
  - d- Maintaining cleanliness of body and clothes.
  - e- Showing respect and appreciation to others.
- 2- The child will feel the greatness of Allah's favors on him and will feel the desire to fulfill the needs of the poor.
- 3- The child will learn how to show sympathy and kindness to the poor and even prefer them to himself.

- 4- He will show love to neighbors and keep good relations with them.
- 5- He will realize the efforts his mother exerts and the pain she endures for him and will be dutiful to her in a practical way. In addition, he will learn some methods of cooking.
- 6- He will care for the feelings of others.
- 7- The child will realize the importance of unity within the family.
- 8- The child will ascribe the favors to their real Creator and will always reflect on these favors and meditate on his own actions should he be without food at any time.

## (2) Sleeping

### Morals

- 1- Teaching the child the supplications and the etiquette of sleeping. The etiquette of sleeping include the following:
  - a- Perform ablution before retiring to bed.
  - b- Dusting the bed sheet and the blanket before sleeping.
  - c- Sleeping on the right side of the body.
  - d- Avoiding lying on one's stomach while sleeping.
  - e- Saying the supplication before sleeping.
  - f- Mentioning the supplication of fear and worry when necessary.
  - g- Uttering the supplication specified for good dreams.
  - h- Upon getting up for *Tahajjud* (Night Vigil), one should utter the supplication specified for it.
- 2- Asking about one's poor neighbors before going to bed and giving him some food.
- 3- A child should kiss his parents before going to bed.
- 4- Brushing the teeth before sleeping with either *Siwak* or toothbrush.
- 5- Making an intention regarding what to do in the next day. Say, for example, "Tomorrow, I will do such and such *Inshaa* Allah."

- 6- Filling his *Wirdul-Muhasabah* (pre-sleeping reckoning of one's deeds during that day ) before sleeping.
- 7- Listening to a bed time story.
- 8- Posing some questions about, why do we sleep and why on the right side of the body ...etc.

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- Such morals and etiquette will teach the child many things such as:
  - a- Feeling the companionship of Almighty Allah at all times.
  - b- Feeling love for the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and his *Sunnah*.
  - c- Bearing hatred for Satan and seeking refuge in Allah from his traps.
  - d- Feeling the joy of showing submission to Allah at times of *Tahajjud*.
  - e- Maintaining one's purity and cleanliness.
- 2- The child will heed the *Hadith* that reads, "He is not one of us who sleeps while his stomach is filled and his neighbor's is aching with hunger."
- 3- The child will learn how to be dutiful to his parents and show respect to them.
- 4- The child will get accustomed to keeping his mouth and teeth clean at all times.
- 5- The child will develop a sense of hope and forming good intentions.



- 6- The child will have a chance to reckon his own deeds and see what is good and what is evil, and thank Allah for the former and seek forgiveness for the latter.
- 7- Moral and practical lessons will be learned from bed time story.
- 8- The child will think deeply about his own habits and reflect on Allah's favors towards him and try to follow the example of our beloved Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him ).

## (3) Getting Up

### **Morals**

- 1- Supplication for getting up.
- 2- Making ablution and performing prayer after it.
- 3- Kissing one's parents.
- 4- Tidying the bed.
- 5- Brushing one's teeth.
- 6- Telling one's parents about a good dream, if he has seen one.
- 7- Doing some physical exercise.
- 8- Making the schedule for the day. The child can be asked, "What are you going to do today?"

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- Getting accustomed to begin the day by praising Allah.
- 2- Starting the day with ablution and prayer.
- 3- Showing obedience to one's parents.
- 4- Helping one's mother and trying to be tidy.
- 5- Keeping one's mouth and teeth clean.
- 6- Following the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and feeling great love for him.

- 7- Maintaining physical fitness and strength, for a strong believer is better and more lovable to Allah than a weak one. Still, both are good.
- 8- Teaching the child how to plan his life and schedule his time.

## (4) Pocket Money

### **Morals**

- 1- Praising Allah after receiving his pocket money.
- 2- Thanking his father.
- 3- Spending a portion of his pocket money in some kind of charity.
- 4- Saving some of his money for future occasions.
- 5- Raising some questions e.g. 'Who gives us money?' and 'What will you do with this money?'
- 6- Depriving him of his pocket money for some time as a form of punishment in case of disobedience.

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- Showing gratitude to Allah, the Almighty for His favors and feeling that He is the sole grantor of all favors.
- 2- The child will learn how to show appreciation for his father's efforts and care.
- 3- The child will never forget that there are many persons suffering from poverty.
- 4- The child will learn how to plan for his future.

- 5- This will teach the child how to meditate on Allah's blessings and trust in Him with regard to sustenance.
- 6- The child will realize how great are the blessings of Allah, especially when he loses this blessing for some time.

## (5) Going to the Mosque

### **Morals**

- 1- Teaching the child the correct way of going to the mosque.  
This is to be done with kindness. Among these etiquette:
  - a- Entering the mosque with the right foot and leaving it with the left one.
  - b- Mentioning the supplication of entering.
  - c- Mentioning the supplication of leaving the mosque.
  - d- Observing calmness and tranquility while present in the mosque.
  - e- Placing his shoes in the place specified for them.
  - f- Avoiding passing in front of persons performing prayers.
  - g- Standing in the back rows that are specified for children.
  - h- Economizing the use of water.
- 2- Removing rubbish from the mosque and participating in cleaning it.
- 3- Performing ablution at home and accompanying one's father to the mosque.
- 4- Removing the rubbish from the road and spreading the Islamic greeting of 'peace and blessings be with you'.

- 5- Mentioning the supplication of leaving the house in addition to the supplication of walking to the mosque.
- 6- Shaking hands with other Muslims and showing affection to them.
- 7- Posing some questions such as 'Why mosques are built?' and 'Why do we pray in the mosque?'

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- Following the etiquette, the child will attain some spiritual and moral benefits among which are the following:
  - a- Having his heart attached to the mosque.
  - b- Rushing to supplication on all occasions.
  - c- Making new friends in the mosque.
  - e- Caring for others feelings and avoiding hurting their feelings.
  - f- Observing purity and cleanliness in all things.
  - g- Learning how to use things moderately.
  - h- Showing respect to the elderly.
- 2- Co-operating with other Muslims and keeping the mosque clean.
- 3- Having a strong relation with one's father, following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him).
- 4- Fulfilling the rights of standing in the road and spreading the Islamic greeting.
- 5- Continually supplicating Allah.

- 6- The child will learn that the only place where he can meet people who love, respect and appreciate him is the mosque.
- 7- Stirring the child's natural tendency to perform charitable deeds and spend money for Allah's sake.



## (6) Urination

### Morals

- 1- Teaching the child the etiquette of urination as follows:
  - a- Using the left leg when entering the bathroom and the right one when leaving it.
  - b- Mentioning the supplication of entering and leaving the bathroom.
  - c- Avoiding urinating while standing up.
  - d- Removing any impurities from one's private parts.
  - e- Washing one's hands with soap and water.
  - f- Not talking while in the bathroom.
  - g- Avoiding facing the direction of *Qiblah* or giving it one's back.
  - h- Shutting the door of the bathroom.
  - i- Not entering the bathroom while having anything that carries the Name of Allah.
  - j- Moderate use of water.
- 2- The child should clean the floor of the bathroom.
- 3- The child should not be prevented from answering the call of the nature.

- 4- Some questions may be posed: 'What happens if we cannot find a bathroom?' and 'What if one cannot urinate?' and 'Who has taught us this etiquette?'

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- The child will learn more morals by adhering to these etiquettes of answering the call of nature. Among these morals are the following:
  - a- Being far from any act of immodesty.
  - b- Remaining free of any impurities.
  - c- Bearing respect to the *Qiblah*.
  - d- Having a high level of sensitivity and nobility.
  - e- Realizing the holiness of the Name of Allah.
  - f- Showing love for the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), who taught us all etiquette.
  - g- Showing hatred for Satan and seeking refuge in Allah from his traps.
- 2- Purity and love for cleanliness will run deep in the child's heart. In addition, he will learn how to help his mother in a practical way.
- 3- The child will learn how to be modest and how to care for the feelings of others and fulfill their rights.
- 4- The child will realize the great Divine blessings on us that enables us to build bathrooms. Another significant blessing is that He, Glory be His, has enabled us to get rid of the waste substances of our bodies that, if remained in our bellies, would be poisonous and harmful.

## (7) Entering and Leaving the House

### **Morals**

- 1- Teaching the child that he should knock on the doors of others thrice. If no permission is given, he should leave after leaving a message.
- 2- Knocking on the door should be done gently.
- 3- In case our door is knocked, the child should be taught how to answer politely.
- 4- When entering a house, the people there should be greeted.
- 5- The door is to be shut gently.
- 6- Kissing his parents before leaving the house and after entering the house.
- 7- He should not enter the private rooms of his brothers, sisters and parents until permission is granted.
- 8- Learning the supplication of leaving and entering.
- 9- Avoiding knocking on the doors of people at delicate times such as in the afternoon (while having a nap ) or late at night unless there is an urgent need for doing so.

## **Aesthetic values**

- 1- The child will learn how to avoid hurting the feelings of others and how to use his time.
- 2- Gentleness, even with inanimate objects, will become the trait of the child.
- 3- The child will have self-confidence and will learn how to behave correctly.
- 4- The child will feel the sweetness of the Islamic greeting.
- 5- Showing humility to one's parents and being dutiful to them.
- 6- Keeping the secrets of others unveiled and never scandalizing them.
- 7- Closely following in the Prophet's footsteps as it is he who has guided us to the truth.
- 8- Caring for the feelings of others and choosing the suitable time for visits. In addition, he will learn the rule that states: 'Necessity dictates exceptions.'

## Secondly: Weekly Events

### (1) On Fridays

#### Morals

- 1- Teaching the child the etiquette and morals pertaining to Friday. Among these are the following:
  - a- Preparing for Friday by organizing one's clothes and sleeping early on Thursday evening.
  - b- Performing *Ghusl* (complete bath)
  - c- Putting on good clothes and wearing perfume.
  - d- Trimming one's nails.
  - e- Going to the mosque early.
  - f- Not stepping over others in the mosque in order to reach the first row.
  - g- Avoiding passing in front of persons performing prayer.
  - h- Sending blessings on the Messenger of Allah.
  - i- Reciting *Surat al-Kahf* (the chapter of the Cave).
  - j- After performing prayer: paying a visit to a sick person, following a funeral procession, learning something or visiting a fellow Muslim.

- 2- Helping in cleaning the house.
- 3- Conducting a small competition on the subject of the *Friday* sermon and the lessons to be deduced from it.
- 4- A brief family picnic to a beautiful place.

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- By following such behavior, many morals will run deep in the heart of a child. For instance:
  - a- Following the Prophet's example perfectly.
  - b- Maintaining purity of one's body and clothes.
  - c- Feeling attached to the mosques and loving to see the Muslims united.
  - d- Showing respect for others and never violating their rights.
  - e- Feeling the holiness of Friday as being the weekly Muslim festival.
  - f- Supplicating Allah, the Almighty at all times and choosing the optimum times for *Du`a*.
  - g- Feeling closely attached to the Qur'an.
  - h- Showing sympathy for others and paying visits to them.
- 2- Co-operation with his family members for the cleanliness and maintenance of the house.
- 3- The child will learn to listen attentively to the Imam and reflect on what he says during the Friday sermon.
- 4- Strengthening the sense of meditation in the child and refreshing his mind and body, let alone attaching him closely to his family.

## **Thirdly: Annual Events**

### **(1) The Month of Ramadan**

#### **Morals**

- 1- Decorating the house and the street to celebrate the coming of the month of Ramadan.
- 2- Congratulating relatives and friends on the coming of the month.
- 3- Making a banquet and inviting relatives and friends and answering their invitations in case they prepare one for us.
- 4- Conducting an evening gathering wherein some competitions are conducted inside the house.
- 5- Allowing the child to participate in helping the poor and distributing alms to them.
- 6- Performing *Fajr*, *Taraweeh* and other prayers in the mosque with his father.
- 7- The child may draw a picture about Ramadan. The picture could be hung on the wall.
- 8- Attending some gatherings for telling a story or making a competition in the nearby mosque.
- 9- Conducting a family meeting to learn how to welcome Ramadan.

- 10- Conducting a gathering for a number of families.
- 11- Conducting a competition in memorizing the Qur'an.
- 12- Participating in *I'tikaf* even if for a short period of time.
- 13- Conducting some competitions on fasting among the children.
- 14- The child can take some dates and distribute them among the fasting persons.

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- Feeling joy at the arrival of Ramadan.
- 2- Strengthening relations with friends, neighbors and relatives.
- 3- The charming sight of relatives and friends being together.
- 4- Having some time for entertainment following the rules of *Shari'ah*.
- 5- The child will learn how to show sympathy to the poor and help them.
- 6- The child will see Muslims performing prayer together in the mosque.
- 7- The child will have confidence and this will allow his talents to appear.
- 8- The child will become attached to the mosque and relations will be developed with the people there.
- 9- The child will develop a sense of belonging to the society.
- 10- The child will learn to plan for his future.
- 11- The child will grow up according to the teachings of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.



12- The child will learn how to perform acts of worship correctly.

13- The child will learn how to be charitable.

## (2) The Days of `Id

### **Morals**

- 1- All family members should participate in cleaning and tidying the house.
- 2- Preparing new garments or repairing old, clean ones.
- 3- Washing, putting on new clothes and wearing perfume. (perfume is only to be worn by boys outside the home).
- 4- Performing `Eid prayer in the open air.
- 5- Visiting relatives and friends and congratulating them at the time of `Eid.
- 6- Paying *Zakatul-Fitr* and participating in slaughtering the Sacrifice.
- 7- Trimming one's nails and having a hair cut.
- 8- A child may draw a picture about `Eid and hang it on the wall.
- 9- When the child receives his `Eid gift, he should learn not to squander it.
- 10- Family gatherings can be conducted following the ones in Ramadan.
- 11- A child may participate in preparing the place, where the `Eid prayer is performed.

12- He should take one of his garments and give it in charity to the poor to make them feel the joy of `Eid.

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- Co-operation, love for purity and beauty will run deep in the child's heart.
- 2- The child will learn to keep his clothes clean and free from impurities.
- 3- In the heart of the child, there will exist a feeling of love for cleanliness at all times. He will learn how to love the Prophet (Peace be upon him ) who guided us to this.
- 4- The child will realize how great the unity of Muslims is. Uttering *Takbir* together is a sign of this unity.
- 5- The value of keeping relations of kinship will become clear to the child.
- 6- The child will have confidence in himself and will learn how to be positive.
- 7- The child's powers of creativity and his own talents will be given the chance to be expressed.
- 8- The child will learn that all those around him love him, and he will also learn how to be moderate in spending.

## Fourthly: Non-Recurrent Events

### (1) Traveling

#### Morals

- 1- The child should be taught the manners pertaining to traveling. They include the following:
  - a- Saying the well-known supplication while bidding good bye to the family.
  - b- Uttering the supplication of leaving the mosque.
  - c- Entering the car, train...etc. without haste.
  - d- Making *Salatul Istikharah* (Seeking Guidance).
  - e- Taking some important articles, such as a mirror, a comb, *siwaak* (or tooth brush) and a *Mus-haf* (copy of the Qur'an).
  - f- Saying the supplication of transportation.
  - g- On returning home, the suitable supplication should be said.
  - h- Saying the supplication of entering the village or the town.
  - i- Passing by the mosque, while returning home, and offering two *Rak`at*.
  - j- Saying the supplication of entering the house.
  - k- Greeting the family.

- 2- Bringing a present to the family.
- 3- Taking a cassette of Islamic songs (*Nasheed*) to be listened to during the journey.
- 4- Reflecting on the surrounding nature and knowing the landmarks of the places. A brief competition can be conducted.
- 5- While traveling, the child puts on clean clothes and applies some perfume.
- 6- Some questions may be posed, for example, 'Why do we travel?' and 'To where are we traveling?'

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- The child will learn through these morals, some other great values such as:
  - a- Feeling close to Allah in all situations and on all occasions.
  - b- Observing supplications at all times.
  - c- Seeking to be gentle in every action.
  - d- Planning well for his life.
  - e- Always remembering his family.
  - f- Keeping his heart attached to the mosque.The child will learn how to utilize his time.
- 2- Love for reflection and meditation will be deeply implanted in the heart of a child.
- 3- The spirit of competitiveness will be encouraged among children and the sense of belonging will be improved. The

importance of the beauty of appearance will be inculcated in the mind of the child.

- 4- The child will get accustomed to thinking about his future and never leave matters to chance.

## (2) On Receiving Guests

### **Morals**

- 1- Participation in tidying and preparing the house. The child must be praised for this participation.
- 2- Receiving the guests and welcoming them warmly and kindly.
- 3- Introducing oneself to them and knowing them in return as well as strengthening relations with them.
- 4- If the guests have brought their children, they can accompany the child and play with him.
- 5- The child may participate in greeting the guests and offering them a drink.

### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- The child will learn how to help his mother and how to welcome guests.
- 2- Love, affection, mercy and kindness will run deep in the child's heart.
- 3- The child will feel self-confidence and feel that he has his own place among those around him.

- 4- The child will be raised on hospitality and welcoming guests.
- 5- Being positive and confident of one's actions are other values that will be attained.



### (3) When Falling Ill

#### **Morals**

- 1- Adult relatives and friends should pay a visit to the child and show sympathy for him.
- 2- Those visiting him should utter the supplication pertaining to this occasion.
- 3- He is to be taught the same supplication and pray for his own speedy recovery.
- 4- He is to be told the *Hadith* that reads: "Try to cure the sick by (offering) charity." This is to be practiced.
- 5- Glad tidings are to be offered, such as those stated in the *Hadith*: "For even a thorn that pierces a believer's foot, he will receive a reward for it."
- 6- We should tell him about the great reward of those, who show patience regardless of what befalls them.
- 7- The child should be encouraged to take medicine according to the instructions of the doctor.

#### **Aesthetic values**

- 1- Such visits will alleviate his pains and show him that others love him.

- 2- He will learn to take refuge in supplication.
- 3- He will learn that Allah, the Almighty is his Healer.
- 4- He will feel attached to the *Hadiths* of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and will never lose hope in getting well.
- 5- He will learn the sweetness of acts of obedience and how sore the acts of disobedience are.
- 6- He will learn how to be patient so as to receive Allah's reward. He will also learn that Almighty Allah loves him.
- 7- He will learn that he should exert efforts and leave the result to Allah, the Almighty, the Owner of all things.

## Chapter Four

### A House Workshop

Each human being has been provided with great energy. This energy is vital as it has the potential for either good or evil. It is either constructive or destructive for a person. This energy, if misused or unused may become useless, and it is only through Islam that this energy can be channeled towards



righteousness. Man should not keep this energy unused thinking that this will save him from harm. Scientists assert that most psychological disorders result from the tension arising from unused energy.

Mature adults need to make use of their energy in the proper way. Children have even more need than adults to use their energy in an appropriate way. This is why the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), said: "*A child's nimbleness in his early age is what makes him more knowledgeable when he is older.*" The word, 'Nimbleness' refers to playing, freshness, movement and associating with others. These are the ways in which a child discharges his energy. Thus, the Prophet, (peace and blessings

be upon him), did not only direct us to the importance of using this energy, but he also showed us the means of doing so, i.e. playing, vitality, power and association with others.

A workshop in the house is an effective way for a child to make use of his energy because it contains many funny objects and tools, which adults often see as useless items such as boxes, empty bottles, plastic bags, strips of cloth, shoes, old clothes, leftovers of wood, hangers, pins, buttons and silver paper. This is in addition to other materials that give the child an opportunity to draw, color, cut, paste, separate and piece together. In this way, a child learns and innovates.

A house workshop provides many benefits, for it allows the child to carry out inventive activities (separately or in a group). This creates a mature and responsible personality in the child and increases their emotional balance and self-confidence. This occurs because the child's creative abilities are enhanced by artistic activities.

In this way, a child is able to use different tools and available resources, no matter how limited they are. So the child grows up loving work regardless of the results. Moreover, the child learns how to use simple materials artistically. The more a child uses materials to create things, the more he feels that he is capable of controlling and making use of things. He will feel productive and useful. Such success will help the child realize his value as a member of society.

## The Ways in Which the House Workshop Fulfills the Child's Needs

When you watch your child carefully, you notice his strong desire to form a workshop in the house. If he is given the chance, he will rush to develop it. Sometimes you find him bringing empty bottles, sand, stones, broken toys, strips of cloth, buttons, pens and other items and collecting them in a private place. When you ask



him about them, he will say that they are his toys and if you continue to watch him, you will discover how much he values these seemingly worthless items. If he is given the chance he will try to add to his collection. A child will do all this alone without requiring instructions from anyone, for there is a strong inner force that controls him. Thus, giving this chance to the child and helping him to make his workshop, will enable him to fulfill an innate need to succeed and become distinguished. Moreover, making good use of this workshop by playing with the child or helping him make a toy and participating with him in some experiments and activities will further help to satisfy the child's desires.

The need to play comes at the top of a child's desires, and satisfying this desire is important as it affects the child's behavior and his present and future psychological state. For example, Muslim reports that Anas once said: "The Messenger of Allah, (peace and blessings be upon him), had the best disposition amongst people. He sent me on an errand one day, and I said: "By Allah, I will not go." I had, however, this idea in my mind that I would do as Allah's Messenger, (peace be upon him), had commanded me to do. I went out until I happened to come across some children who were playing in the street. Meanwhile, Allah's Messenger, (peace and blessings be upon him), came there and stood behind me. I looked towards him and he smiled and said: "*Little Anas, did you go where I commanded you to go?*" I said: "Allah's Messenger, yes, I am going."

Anas, (may Allah be pleased with him), left his main mission to play with the other children. Thus, it is expected that he should be punished, yet the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), was not angry, nor did he vow to punish him. This is because the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), taught us to consider children's needs prior to those of adults. Thus, it is the parents' job to urge their children to make use of their energy in the proper ways."

A house workshop satisfies a child's need to play, and it satisfies other important needs as well, like the need to enjoy freedom. This need is clear when we try to prevent a baby from moving. We see how he becomes angry and tries his best to free himself. This idea also become clear in the child's need to run and play. When a child is able to talk, we also observe another kind of freedom, which is that of expressing himself. This kind

of freedom should not be left unrestricted, hence the need for a kind, controlling power and authority over the child. The child wants to feel free, yet to be sure of his success and the acceptance of others, he turns to his parents for assurance and feels secure when his behavioral boundaries are established and maintained.

Participating with the child in some scientific experiments and helping him make his own toys are the best means of providing this kind of 'directed freedom.'

In addition, the house workshop helps parents to satisfy their children's need for encouragement. During the early years of his life, a child likes to express his individuality and to feel that he is a person who can perform various jobs. Thus, parents should praise and encourage him. When a child performs a certain activity, he is seeking to satisfy a psychological need, namely the need for appreciation. Words of appreciation, however simple they are, have a very positive affect on people. Moreover, all human beings need to be appreciated for the work they perform, whether it is in drawing, writing speeches, making embroidery, cooking or even studying. A person feels happy when he is appreciated, and feels bitter when he is criticized and blamed.

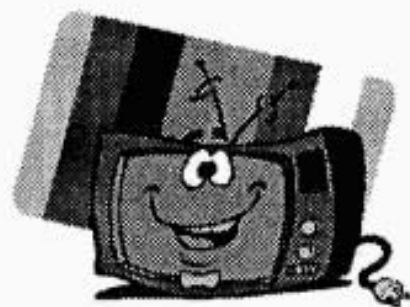
When we look closely, we will find that parents' participation with their children in a house workshop also satisfies the child's need for love. It creates an atmosphere of mutual love between a child, his siblings and his parents. This atmosphere is important to form a healthy personality for the child, and it makes him enjoy feelings of security, happiness and self-confidence. When a child is raised on such feelings, he senses the love of the people surrounding him, for he becomes familiar with them and

treats them decently. He also gets to help those who need help and sympathize with others. This in turn makes a child feel that he belongs to his society and that he is a useful member, which makes him feel satisfied and happy.



## The Workshop Is Important ... but!

We may expect a mother to say, "I believe that my children are in need of a house workshop, but I am exhausted and I have no time to share in their activities. Moreover, what you are saying is only theoretical words that no mother can do!"



To such a mother we say, "Wait a minute, O loving mother! Don't make hasty judgements. First, let us read the saying reported by Ibnu Majah and Ahmad from Asmaa' bintu `Umais, Ja`far's wife, (may Allah be pleased with her). She said, 'When Ja`far and his friends were wounded, the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), came in and found that I had tanned the hides of forty animals (sheep or cows), baked bread, washed my children and cleaned them..'

Such a *sahabeya* (Companion lady) was also a mother like you. She is from a simple society where there is no fridge, washing-machine, and no oven, but still, she managed to tan the animals' casings, bake the bread and wash and clean her children and she didn't complain. This is because she was aware that she is a guardian of her husband's house.

Isn't she a good example?

Dear honorable mother, if you abandon and ignore your children because you are tired, then who else will be able to bring them up on a right and firm basis? Who other than a mother can do so? Who else can direct them to the right way, and lead them to be well behaved, generous, loving, just and good, except you?

So, lead your children to the right path; to the light of goodness and beauty. Lead them to Allah."

A father might say, "I believe strongly in the importance of the house workshop and I would like to share with my children in their activities and experiences, but I can't because I am busy. What you are trying to convey is nice and convincing, yet it is hard to apply!"

To such a father we say, "Wait a minute dear father! We have an important question for you. 'Do you think you are busier than Allah's Messenger, (peace and blessings be upon him), was? Surely you are not. The Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him), was entrusted with the Message of Allah, so he was an example, a guide, a tutor, a leader, a tradesman, a fighter and a scholar. In spite of all this he did not ignore children. In fact he was tender with them and used to joke with them and share their innocent games. He used to hold competitions between them, he used to allow them to sit with the elders, and used to advise and pardon them, to mention but a few of the examples of love, compassion and mercy. So shouldn't we imitate the Prophet, (peace and blessings be upon him)?"

Dear father, do you know that when you ignore your child and overlook the importance of playing with him or sharing his happy or sad moments, then you are leaving him to others to

raise him! The other party in this case might be the television, the street, his friends, relatives or neighbors. Moreover, the child will soon give up seeking you as someone to participate in his play.

This was exactly what happened to Ahmad, a nine-year old boy. Ahmad went to his neighbor, Mr. Farid, and asked him to explain the internal components of a small plane he wanted to construct himself. Mr. Farid loves Ahmad and often helps him in his plans. He wondered why Ahmad comes to him instead of going to his father, so one day he asked him casually: "Your father is a mechanic engineer and I am sure he knows these things better than I, why don't you ask him?" The child said: "My father has no time to take care of such matters; he has prepared a room for me and brought me tools to play with, but he is always busy. I often hear him say: "I am busy...I have no time."

Dear father, sometimes you wonder about a present to offer your son or daughter. So, you think about toys if the children are young. You might also consider buying them new clothes, which they will boast of in front of their friends, or you give them money to buy whatever they want if they are older. In fact, the best gift you can give to your children is yourself. Scientific research has proven the importance of sharing the life of one's children especially in the first years of their life. Special attention should be paid to the pre-school years. In that period the child's character is being formulated. So would you take this into consideration and spend some useful time with them? I direct these words to dear parents. Rearing children is not easy. It requires love, effort, time and commitment. So a parent's duty is not only to provide food, clothes and the like. Rather, true

parenthood means educating the child, talking to him, praising him and sharing his time of play. This is true parenthood."

To be objective in our study, we present some practical experiments and games that you can play with your children in the house workshop.

This will be based on two points:

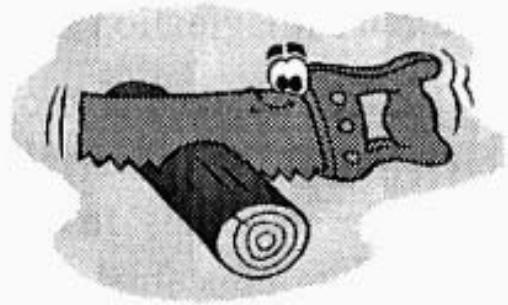
First, Your child makes his own toys.

Second, Your child is a young scientist and inventor.

May Allah guide us all to the straight path.

## Your Child Makes His Own Toys

It is an established scientific fact that a child's toy contributes to his education and entertainment. When the child makes his own toys, this upgrades his efficiency and increases his sense of innovation. This behavior gradually spills into the child's future life. He will love work and will become creative and cooperative. Therefore, it is necessary to train children to enhance the productive spirit within them. This may be achieved through encouraging them to make toys for themselves and for their siblings and friends which will make them happy and will teach them a lot.



This fact is further evidenced by a study conducted on children of the first-kindergarten year in Madeenah, Saudi Arabia, entitled 'Playing and Children's Creativity.' Certain recommendations were the outcome of the extensive study in the field of education, directed to cultivating children's creativity:

"A child's originality should be encouraged by helping him make his own toys out of the available materials in his surrounding environment. This is likely to cultivate the child's innovative talents."

To achieve the utmost benefits, children should be directed to make use of the available materials in their environment, such as 'tree branches, dried plants, ditch reed, palm branches and leaves, arum, tins, cartons, stones, shells, beads, cork and strips of cloth.' These materials are usually considered worthless but they can be formed into different shapes and employed in many ways. Hence, we as educators are to collect unneeded objects and materials and make use of them artfully to cultivate children's imagination and creativity.

Reflecting on the biography of the Prophet's Companions, (may Allah be pleased with them all), we find that using available materials in making toys for children was a main principle in education. In this concern, Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrate on the authority of Ar-Rubi` Bint Mu`waz, (may Allah be pleased with her), who said, "*On the morning of `Ashura', the Messenger of Allah, (peace and blessings be upon him), sent to the villages of Al-Ansar saying, 'Whoever is fasting let him complete his fast, and whoever is not fasting let him fast the rest of the day.'*" The narrator adds, "Hence, from that time onwards, we got used to fasting and making our children fast (on that day). We used to go to the mosque and make toys for them out of wool, and if one of them cried out of hunger we would give a toy to him to distract him from hunger until the time for breaking fast." Wool was a widely available material in their environment, so they used it in making their toys.

Incorporating creative and positive 'play' into the educational upbringing of our children is a convincing and genuine principle that is necessary to be implemented. The following is a collection of selected designs for toys, which a child can make

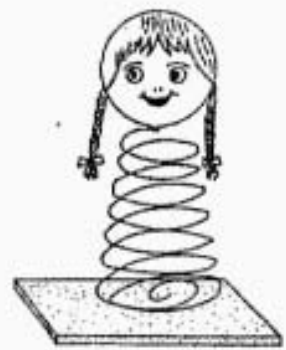
with the help of grown-ups. The child can use some available materials from his surrounding environment. May Allah bestow success on us all.

# The First Design

## A Nice Doll

### Materials:

- a small plastic ball, like a table-tennis ball
- a strong flexible wire
- long strands of wool
- strips of cloth
- a square or a rectangular piece of wood
- glue
- assorted colors



### Directions:

- 1- Make a hole in the ball, so that you can insert the end of the wire therein.
- 2- Twist the wire and insert it inside the hole in the ball.
- 3- Fix the other end of the wire into the piece of wood either by making a hole in it and inserting the wire or in any other way you see suitable.
- 4- Use the colors to draw a face onto the ball and fix the piece of cloth above the face to form the hair and fix the wool strings to the sides of the head to form two beautiful braids.



Following these steps you will make a nice doll.

N.B. Once the children get used to making such dolls well you may hold a contest between them and give a reward to the maker of the best doll. You may also give them the chance to innovate. You may tell them that whoever makes the nicest doll will get a prize.

## The Second Design

### *'Id Sheep*

#### **Materials:**

- 1- a strip of natural sheep's wool
- 2- the inside of a roll of tissue paper.
- 3- two pieces of cork: one for the legs and the other for the head
- 4- glue
- 5- a cutter
- 6- assorted colors
- 7- two round pieces of cardboard



#### **Directions:**

Stick the sheep's wool round the cylinder with glue and fix the two round pieces of cardboard to the ends of the roller and cover them with wool.

Draw the face of a sheep on one of the pieces of cork to make the head of the sheep, emphasizing the features of the face with colors, then fix the head to the body of the toy sheep and cover it with wool, except for the eyes and the mouth.

Make the legs from white cork and fix them to the body using pins or glue, then cover them with wool to give them a natural shape.

To make the tail, fix some strands of wool to the back piece of round cardboard.

## The Third Design

### Keeping Your Balance (Game)

#### Materials:

- 1-Two strong, closed tins or two, thick pieces of wood
- 2-A long piece of strong rope
- 3-A hammer
- 4-Nails of different sizes



#### Directions:

**First**, if you use two tins, apply the following steps:

- 1-Make two holes on the sides of the tins using a nail.
- 2-Insert the end of the rope inside the hole, then make a knot at the end. Do the same to the other end of the rope.
- 3-Repeat this process to the second tin with another piece of rope.
- 4-Now the child can put his feet onto the tins, hold the ropes and walk.

**Second**, if you use two pieces of wood instead, do the following:

- 1-Fix two strong nails to the sides of the piece of wood.

2-Tie the ends of the rope to the nails.

3-Do the same with the second piece of wood.

4-Now the child can stand on the two pieces of wood and hold the rope and walk.

N.B.

You can hold a race between the children and assign every child to make his own toy to use in the race. The race must be held in a suitable place such as, a garden or a playground. First aid should be ready and rewards should be given to the winners.

# The Fourth Design

## A Money Box

### Materials:

- 1-An empty bowl or any clean can
- 2-White and colored cardboard
- 3-A pair of scissors
- 4-Glue
- 5-Assorted Colors



### Directions:

- 1-Clean the bowl or the can and fix the cover well. Stick the colored cardboard around the can with glue.
- 2-Make a drawing, of a rose for example, on the white cardboard.
- 3-Fix the painting to the bowl or can.
- 4-Make a flat hole in the cover so that the child can insert coins into it.

## The Fifth Design

### A Balancing Toy

#### Materials:

- 1-A hanger
- 2-Two plastic pots
- 3-Strong pieces of strings
- 4-Some blocks of soap

#### Directions:

- 1- Make a hole in both ends of the hanger.
- 2- Make three holes near the edge of each pot provided that the distance between them is the same.
- 3- Insert a string into each hole and insert the three strings into the hole at the end of the hanger. Do the same to the other pot.
- 4- Slice the blocks of soap into different sizes, representing different weights, for example, a kilo, half a kilo, and so on.
- 5-Tie the balance with a long rope to the ceiling or hold the rope and use it to weigh things.

N.B.

This balance can be incorporated into various games and activities. For example, the child can play as a trader and the family members as customers.



# The Sixth Design

## The Knight and the Horse

### Materials:

- 1-A sheet of strong cardboard
- 2-A rectangular shaped carton
- 3-Some colored string and wool
- 4-Glue
- 5-Scissors and assorted colors



### Directions:

- 1-Make two holes in the cover of the carton, a big one for the child and a small one for the head of the horse.
- 2-Draw a horse on the sheet of cardboard taking care to color its eyes, nose and mouth. Then, stick the wool to it so it looks like a horse.
- 3-Fix the head of the horse into the hole made for it.
- 4-Color the whole carton.
- 5-The child can insert himself inside the hole made for him and hold the bridle he makes out of colored strings and 'ride' the horse.

N.B.

A race may be held between the children as follows:

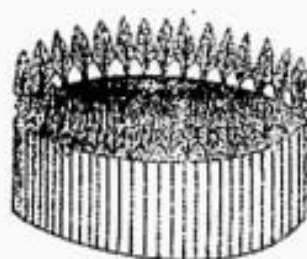
- 1- Specify a date for the contest and inform the children of it.
- 2- Assign every child to make his own horse, with his family's help.
- 3- Give each horse a number and give a speech about horses and their importance before the race starts.
- 4- After the race give a reward to the winner.

## The Seventh Design

### A Crown of Feathers

#### Materials:

- 1- A piece of zigzag carton like that found inside medicine packages or any colored cardboard
- 2- Some white or colored feathers
- 3- Water color paints
- 4- Glue



#### Directions:

- 1- Cut the cardboard into bands suitable for the child's head and stick the ends to each other, then color and decorate it.
- 2- Color the white feathers and let them dry or use naturally colored feathers.
- 3- Insert the feathers into the holes of the medicine package or fix them with glue on the ordinary carton band and cover it with a second layer.

Now the crown is ready for the young prince or princess.

N.B.

The child can use this crown to play the role of a king with his friends or members of his family. Another nice idea is to gather the children for a special celebration to give a crown as a reward to the child, who makes the best crown.

## The Eighth Design

### A Duck

#### Materials:

- 1- A strong carton
- 2- Cutter
- 3- Glue
- 4- Cardboard
- 5- Assorted Colors and colored paper



#### Directions:

- 1- Cut the carton into four parts; each two are identical, as follows:
  - a- two equal sized oval parts for the body
  - b- two equal sized circles for the head
- 2- Insert cardboard between each pair of shapes, and stick them together with glue.
- 3- Draw the face of a duck onto the circular parts and make its beak from cardboard.
- 4- Cut out a carton band and fix it under the head, then insert it inside the forepart of the body of the duck. This will

serve as the neck and legs, and will allow the head to move.

5-Cover the duck with colored paper or color it. (You could also glue little white feathers onto the body).

N.B.

We can encourage the child to make a duck for himself by promising to tell him a nice story if he makes it well. We also can use his duck as a narrator of the story. Thus the duck would be a method of gaining his attention and attracting him to the activity.

## The Ninth Design

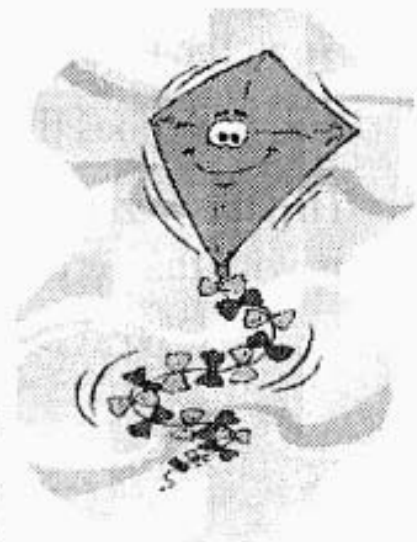
### A Kite

#### Materials:

- 1-A large sheet of colorful paper
- 2-A piece of ditch reed
- 3-A piece of strong string
- 4-Glue

#### Directions:

- 1- Decide on the shape of your kite (square, rectangular, pentagon, hexagon, octagon...) Let's make it a hexagon.
- 2- To make the body of the kite, slice the ditch reed into thin, equal sized sticks of the required length. Tie these sticks in the center of the intersection using some strong string. The number of sticks depends on the shape you choose for the kite.
- 3- Cover the body of the kite with colored paper using glue. If you have small pieces of paper, you can stick them together with glue to make a sheet of paper big enough to cover the whole kite.



- 4- Tie three strong pieces of string together. The first between two adjacent ends (A, B), and the second from those ends to the point of intersection, so as to make it balance. Then, tie a long piece of string to the point of intersection to allow the kite to fly high.
- 5- The tail of the kite: stick rectangular strips of colored paper onto a strong piece of string, which is longer than three folds of the body of the kite. Then, attach the tail to the ends opposite to A and B. Take care that the tail should be heavy enough to keep the kite from spinning while flying.

Now, the kite is ready to take off.

But, how does the kite rise into the air?

The answer to this question is that when the kite flies, it flows with the air current, and the air pushes it up high.



# The Tenth Design

## A Paper Fan

### Materials:

- 1- A square piece of white or colored paper
- 2- A pair of scissors
- 3- A pin
- 4- A small wooden stick or a wooden pencil
- 5- An empty pen

There are two ways to make a fan:

### The first way:

- 1- Fold angle (a) of the square paper on angle (c). Then fold angle (b) on angle (d). Now the paper is divided into a group of triangles.
- 2- Cut along the folded lines until they reach the center. (This results in four triangles meeting at the center of the paper).
- 3- Fold one end of the two free ends of each triangle.
- 4- Collect the four folded triangles from the center.

- 5- Fix them together with a pin at the center of the paper and pass the pin through to the other side.
- 6- Fix the tip of the pin inside a pencil or a wooden stick. This is the way the first paper fan is made.

**The second way:**

- 1-Fold the paper into two equal rectangular shapes.
- 2-Cut the papers into strands of 1 or 1.5 centimeters.
- 3-Connect three of the paper strands with each other.

Still, there is an important question:

Why does the air turn the paper fan when someone holds it and runs or when it is exposed to an air current?

The answer to this question is that the air pushes the edges of the paper fan. This makes it spin, and the stronger the air current, the faster the fan will spin.

## **Your Child is a Little Scientist and Inventor**

Your child is really a little scientist and inventor but perhaps you do not realize this or just disregard it. Look at him when he faces a problem. He thinks carefully until he finds a solution. For example, when he wants to get something which is placed in a high place, he thinks carefully and studies his surroundings until Allah guides him to a new idea. You might find him bringing a chair and climbing onto it to reach his goal.

Unfortunately, we as adults often disregard such discoveries of our children simply because they are common and sometimes annoying. Yet, they may be the starting point that leads to great discoveries and inventions. So, under favorable circumstances, such childish discoveries may grow with time through thinking and meditation and guidance from Allah into great inventions that could effect humanity and even change the course of history.

Let's take a two-sided road as an example. The story of dividing roads into two lanes is really interesting!

It is well known that dividing roads for streams of traffic is very common all over the world; roads are divided into two lanes, one for the oncoming vehicles and one for the going. This division is applied everywhere inside cities, between towns and

suburbs and between different states. No one can deny the importance of such divisions, but few could tell you about the one who first thought of dividing roads in this manner. Its inventor was a six-year old child. That child was the first one who thought of dividing roads into two lanes to prevent overcrowding. Who do you think that child is?

He was Sabour Ibnu Hurmuz, the young king of Persia. One time while he was napping, lots of people with their animals, children and carriages were jamming over Deglah (Tigris) Bridge trying to cross it. This caused great confusion, quarreling and shouting, and the noise reached King Sabour and he woke up feeling very upset. He asked what the matter was and was told that it was due to the overcrowding of people coming and going, trying to cross the bridge. Sabour looked from the window of his palace and examined the scene. Then, he said: "What is this confusion for? Build another bridge and make one for those who leave the town and another for those who enter it, then there would be no problem." The idea was readily implemented and this was the first suggestion to make double-direction roads that are now applied all over the world.

To allow an outlet for our children's creativity and improve their abilities, we should make them feel that we trust them. At the same time we have to continually encourage them. In this concern, we may follow the example of our great predecessors.

Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi reported that Ahmad Ibnun-Nadhr Al-Hilali quoted his father saying: "While I was sitting with Sufianu ibn `Uyaynah (and his companions), a little boy entered the mosque. The men seemed to look down upon him because he was so young. Hence, Sufian recited: ﴿ *Like him (as he now is)*

were you all before; but Allah has since then been gracious unto you. Therefore beware of discrimination. Allah Knows what you do. ﴿ (An-Nisa: 94), and said: O Nadhr, had you seen me when I was ten years old, you would have been astonished. I was five spans of the hand's height, my face was like a Dinar, and I looked like a nail among men. My ink well was like a nut, my eyes looked like two leaves from a banana tree and my pen was like an almond (that is, he and everything with him were very small). Then, when I entered any teaching session, people said: Leave some room for the little Sheikh." Then Ibn `Uyaynah smiled widely. Ahmad added: "So, my father also smiled."

Along with the confidence we show our children and our encouragement, they themselves need to develop self-confidence. In this concern, we may recall an incident that shows the keenness of `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), to implant confidence in the soul of Ibnu `Abbas, (may Allah be pleased with him). Ibn Mubarak reports in his book 'Az-Zuhd' (abstention from worldly pleasures), and Ibn Jareer, Ibn Abi Hatim and Al-Hakim also reported in the 'Mustadrak' (the addendum) that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: "On which occasion do you think the following Ayah (verse) was revealed: ﴿ *Would any of you like to have a garden of palm trees and vines, with rivers flowing underneath it, with all kinds of fruit for him therein; and old age has stricken him and he has feeble off- spring; and a fiery whirlwind strikes it and it is (all) consumed by fire. Thus Allah makes plain His revelations unto you, in order that you may give thought ﴿ (Al-Baqarah: 266). The people replied: "Allah knows best." `Umar became angry and said: "Say whether you know or otherwise". Here Ibn `Abbas*

said: "I have an idea about it, O Commander of the Believers."  
`Umar said: "Speak up son, and do not look down upon yourself." Ibnu `Abbas said: "It (the *Ayah*) draws an image."  
`Umar said: "Which image?" The boy said: "An image of some deed." `Umar said: "(Yes, it draws the image of) a rich man who does good deeds, then Allah sends him a *shaitan* (devil) who suggests to him to do evil deeds that invalidate all his previous good deeds..."

From the two incidents we have just mentioned, let the slogan of parents and educators be these two quotations: "Leave some room for the little Sheikh." and "Speak up son, and do not look down upon yourself." These two quotations are not to be only memorized but they must be applied. The best way for parents to help their children, is to encourage them to carry out some scientific research and play creative games. This can be achieved by having a house workshop, where the child can play, think, learn and invent in an atmosphere of freedom and encouragement.

Dr. Maher Isma`il Sabry speaks about these kinds of games. She says: "There is a kind of game known as scientific games. Such games give the player variable experiences and help him understand some scientific subjects and phenomena. They also enable him to react soundly to whatever he encounters in his daily life. All this is done in an exiting and interesting manner. The efficacy of this type of games in simplifying and explaining scientific phenomena, has been proven practically, especially with children."

The same idea is further stressed in George Barr's book entitled 'Enjoyable Research for Little Scientists.' He addressed

the children saying, "While you are carrying out your own experiments, you will learn the ways of scientists and so you will yourself become a scientist."

Now we would like to present a selection of some creative, scientific experiments and games that can be played at the house workshop. These examples offer a glimpse at the starting points in the child's present and future life.

# The First Experiment

## Wasted Water

When water is temporarily unavailable, everyone starts to think about the water they waste everyday without thinking about it. One of the most common ways of wasting water lies in neglecting to mend taps. If you have a leaking tap, you may



collect the drops of leaking water in a scale to know the quantity of wasted water in one hour and calculate how much water was wasted in a whole day and in a week and so on. Then add this to the quantity of water wasted in each house according to the number of houses in your district, and you will find the overall quantity of wasted water is really incredible.

You may present a good idea to your friends about the way to know the quantity of wasted water. In your house workshop, try to find a plastic vessel and fill it with water. Then make a small hole in the bottom to allow one drop per second just like a leaking tap. Then put an empty vessel under the one you filled with water to know the quantity of wasted water in ten minutes and then multiply it to know the amount of waste in a day, a week, and in a month, then multiply it once more to know the amount of waste, not only at your house, but for your district.



## **The Second Experiment**

### **Sea Water**

We always enjoy swimming and diving in the sea, but how often do we try to obtain salt from the sea? To know this practically, bring an empty bottle and fill it with sea water. Then, pour the water slowly into an aluminum pot and put it on fire and wait. You will notice that the water evaporates. Let it evaporate till it is finished, then you will find the wet salt remaining in the pot. Now the experiment is complete.

N.B.

The percentage of salt in the sea water is (3.5- 3.6 %).

## The Third Experiment

### How Quickly Do You Walk?

Do you know the average speed of your walking? Learning this is useful if you want to know the distance of some place by calculating the time you take to reach it. The other idea is that you can calculate the time you would take to reach some place if you know how far it is. People who have the ability to know their walking speed are always on time, because they know the time they need to reach a certain place.

Now, how can we acquire such an ability?

You can walk for an hour, and calculate the distance you covered, to learn your walking speed per hour. Then, divide it to know your speed per minute.

An easier way is to bring a one-meter piece of rope or string. Go with a friend to an open place and specify a starting point and measure 100 meters from it, then walk from the starting point to the end of the 100 meters and ask your friend to tell you the amount of time you take. Then calculate your speed using a mathematical formula.

Walking speed = distance /time =100/ the time you spent walking.

Let's assume that you walk for 100 meters per minute. Then, your walking speed is:  $100/1 = 100/\text{minute}$ .

## The Fourth Experiment

### Your Clothes and Chewing Gum

Sooner or later you might sit or step on a piece of gum. Now it's time to learn how to act in such a situation.

When gum becomes solid, it does not stick to things. You can make use of this fact in removing gum from clothes, leather, metals, wood, paper and nylon. The idea is very simple, but may solve many problems. Try to solve such problems and notice the result. Beware that rough treatment may tear soft cloth.



Now, bring a piece of cloth and stick a piece of used gum to it and leave it for some time. Use the fridge or put a piece of ice onto the gum to turn the gum into a solid substance. Then, notice the result. If this fails to remove the gum altogether, repeat the same process many times. The cleaning liquids like benzene and bleaches might also be useful.

## **The Fifth Experiment**

### **The Strongest Concrete Paste**

If you have seen builders who use or prepare concrete, you would find that they make it by mixing cement, stones and sand particles together. Actually, the quantity of each kind is not added haphazardly, rather it depends on a specific percentage. The question now is: 'What is the strongest concrete paste?'

To know the answer, mix some cement, stones and sand particles together with water, and make small balls or the like, then let them harden. When the balls harden, let each one fall from a height onto the ground and register the number of balls, which break.

From this experiment, we can deduce that to make strong concrete, we must mix one part of cement with two parts of stones and two parts of sand. If the quantity of stones or sand was more than that, the concrete would be brittle and weak, and this would bring about many accidents, which cause harm to innocent people.

## **The Sixth Experiment**

### **Warm and Cold Water**

A long time ago, before the invention of pendulum clocks, time was measured by the flow of water falling in drops from water clocks. But, what would happen if the temperature changed? Would the water clock give the wrong time?

To know the answer of this question, search in your house workshop for a tin and make a very small hole, which allows small drops of water to leak out rapidly as it fills with water. Fill the tin with cold water and calculate the time it takes to empty. Repeat the same process with water of different temperatures and observe the time it takes to empty, then answer the question yourself.

## The Seventh Experiment

### Keeping Water Cold

When you take a shower, you feel fresh. The main reason behind this is that the temperature of your skin evaporates the water on it and leaves your body cool. Can you apply the same principle to keep a bottle of water cold on a summer day. If you can do this successfully, it will be useful on a journey or picnic, especially in hot weather.

To apply this practically, bring two bottles of cold water each having equal amounts, and put them close to each other, so that they are exposed to the same weather conditions. Cover one of them with a wet cloth and the other with a dry one. Continue wetting the wet cloth from time to time with water from the tap and then cover the bottle with it again. Leave the two bottles as they are for an hour, but observe the water temperature every 20 minutes. Take note of the result and then answer the previous question yourself.

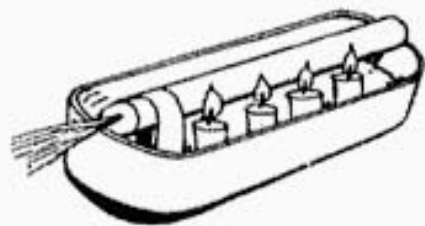
<b>Bottles covered with a dry cloth</b>	<b>Bottles covered with a wet cloth</b>	<b>Timing</b>
—	—	At the beginning
—	—	After 20 minutes
—	—	After 40 minutes
—	—	After 60 minutes

## The Eighth Experiment

### A Launching Sardine Can

Surely you have seen a motorboat before, but can you make one using a sardine can?

You need an empty sardine can, a metal cylinder closed from both ends and small candles. Make a hole in one end of the cylinder and put some water inside, then fix the cylinder inside the empty sardine can. Fix the small candles inside the sardine can around the cylinder and light them. Then put the launch (sardine can) in a big container filled with water and wait for some minutes. What do you see?



The launch starts to move, then its speed increases. The cause of this is that the flames of the candles heat the water inside the cylinder causing steam to come out of the small hole you made at the end of the cylinder. The steam comes strongly from the back pushing the launch in the opposite direction.



## The Ninth Experiment

### Paper Balloon

To make a paper balloon, you will need help from some friends and an adult. It is so easy to make one. Do as follows:

You will need some large pieces of paper and strong glue. Cut the paper into twelve pieces: 150 cm. high and 14 cm. wide. You and your friends should then stick these strands of paper beside each other tightly. Then fix a circular cardboard to the top of the balloon and a band of cardboard around the bottom hole of the balloon. This fixes the edges of the bands from which the balloon is made.

Now the balloon is ready to take off. But how can it take off?

Taking off depends on whether the air is hot. If it is hot, it becomes lighter. So, it goes up pushing the balloon to the higher layers of the atmosphere. That is why real hot air balloons contain strong heaters.

In order that the paper balloon takes off, we can dig a hole in the ground and put some pieces of wood in it and light them. But, make sure you have an adult with you. This should take place in some open land away from houses and gardens. When the sticks of wood burn and smoke rises from the fire, you can cooperate in carrying the balloon and setting it vertically over

the source of fire. Wait for some time till the balloon fills with smoke and hot air, and until you feel that it is ready to fly without the need of holding it. Now, you can let it fly until the hot air inside it gets cold, and then it will come down again.

## **The Tenth Experiment**

### **Floating Ships**

When we see ships in the sea or the river, some may ask whether a ship floats higher in sweet water or in salty water? To answer this question, do the following:

Bring a pencil with a rubber on the end. Insert a pin into the rubber. This would function as a ship, because when it is put in water, the rubber end with the pin will sink, while the pointed tip would float on the water.

Fill a vessel with sweet water and put the pencil in it, then measure the part that floats on the water with a ruler. Then add some salt to the water and measure it again. You will find that ships float higher in salt water than in sweet water.



## Chapter Five

### The Importance of Play

Islam is the religion of life and reality, which deals with people as human beings having their own nature, feelings and psychological characteristics. It does not presume that all their speech is praise of Allah, that all their silent



periods are meditation, that all their contemplation is aimed at drawing lessons and that all their leisure is devoted to worship. Rather, Islam admits the need of humanity to have pleasure and joy; play and gaiety and joking and fun making provided that they are satisfied within the legislation of Allah and in the context of Islamic behavior.

In this context, 'Ali, (may Allah be pleased with him), says: "Give vent to hearts and seek wisdom." This phrase indicates the need of man, or of the heart of man, for amusement. It also points to the most favorable kind of amusement, which is to be funny and wise.

If playing and gaiety (as a sort of amusement) are so important to people in general, they are more important to

children in particular. Playing is considered the slogan of their lives, the delight of their souls and the uplifting of their hearts. The moment they get up in the morning, they seek to play; the moment they go to bed, they still cling to their toys. Between getting up and going to sleep, they spend their time joyfully, merrily and briskly playing one game or another.



While play is a means of amusement for adults, it is the way in which a child can learn and understand life. When we see a child playing, he/she is not only at play, but is also actively moving and growing up to comprehend life. During his activity, movement and growth, or what we call 'play', he/she neither conceives the meaning of play nor seeks it. Rather he acts naturally to learn how to stand, walk and speak as we do. He learns through us and tries to understand life and what we term 'playing.'

Since playing is so important to the souls, minds and hearts of our children, we must reconsider our thinking and rearrange our plans so that we perceive 'play' in its proper perspective. The goal is to give our children as many chances to play as they want in order to meet their needs and satisfy their desires, in a way that is approved by our true religion.

## **Play leads to all the Roads of learning and Individual Development**

A father might ask: "I want to raise my son to be an ideal of nobility, decency and manhood. What should I do?"

Our answer to this good father is: Make use of 'play', as it is your means to reach that target. Given such a reply, do not think that we are making fun of you; this cannot be our approach. To support our piece of advice, let's read what At-Tirmidhi narrated in his narrations from the Prophet (PBUH) who says, "*A child's nimbleness, vividness, vigor and association with others add to his good mentality when he grows up.*" In this *Hadith*, we feel how important playing is in a child's life, as he/she has an instinctive love of movement, running and practicing activities. So, we must deal with this instinct and guide it towards what is useful. Moreover, this tradition denotes that playing is a child's path to sanity and wisdom.

Supporting this *Hadith*, a Japanese psychologist says, "Manhood without childhood is a misery." What is it that urged this scholar to utter such a phrase? It may be attributed to the fact that Japanese traditions accelerate children toward manhood. They implant in them that they are young men, then men, and then old men. Hence, children put on adult clothes, behave like them and are treated on the same footing. However,

in the wake of the Second World War, Japan realized that owing to the war and in the midst of massive industrialization and progress, it had ignored an important factor, which was the importance of giving children an opportunity to enjoy their childhood and play in the company of their parents. Hence, Japanese psychologists conclude that the misery of the Japanese home was attributed to the fact that men had not played when they were children.

There is an important piece of advice regarding 'play' as the road to nobility and decency, which represent two characteristics of manhood. 'Urwa ibnuz-Zubair said to his children, "Oh, my children! Play, since nobility comes after playing."

A scientist or an inventor might ask, "We want to transfer the spirit of invention and innovation to our children. How can we succeed in this mission?"

To answer this serious question, we can say that one of the most important means of rendering this mission successful is directing children's 'play' in a useful and creative way. The kind of play we are referring to has two sides: an ostensible side, marked by gaiety, fun and joy and a hidden one characterized by invention and innovation. To endorse the truthfulness of these words, you can observe a group of children at play. You will find that they think in the same way as we do. You might even be pleased with their way of thinking when you discover that their thinking is mature and might not even occur to the adult mind.. We can conclude that our children sometimes innovate while playing; we would not be exaggerating if we say that they innovate all the time.



Some parents might think that a child's practices are mere playing and merriment. However, the children themselves, regard it in a very different way. To them, playing is not mere amusement, incorporating activities, invention and innovation. They change it into a serious issue to which they devote all their strength and with which they interact whole-heartedly. This means that playing has an essential role in developing a child's capability to invent and innovate. Therefore, it is necessary to give our children an opportunity to

play and amuse themselves in order that they can invent, innovate and achieve good results.

There are many points that help to enhance a child's ability to innovate when playing such as:

Playing tools must include things that incite him to use his muscles as well as other means that encourage thinking and invention.

Challenging games that suit his age are favorable.

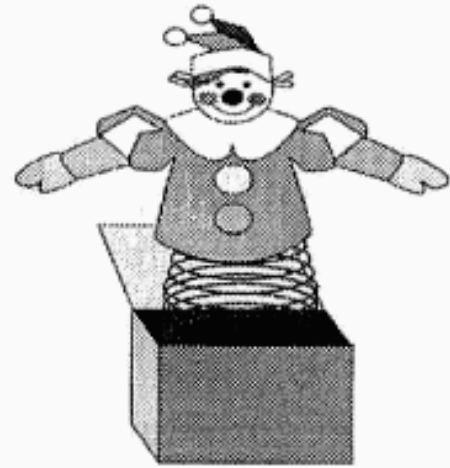
He must be encouraged to make and invent his own playing tools.

He must always be urged to invent things on his own and come up with new ideas.

The child is to be encouraged to produce his own innovations, and be prepared to invent novel ideas and translate them into concrete objects.

He must be praised, not blamed, when he diversifies in his playing. What we see as distortion to his toys, is viewed by him as an addition, particularly when he interprets this addition in a logical way within his abilities and disposition.

Parents' follow-up of their children's play must not turn into interference and suggestions, since children like freedom and can become introverted due to their parents' restrictions.



Last of all, if a child is correctly guided while playing, this will be the nucleus of his future movement and invention.

A mother might ask, "I wish to raise my child into a well-mannered, generous person. What should I do?"

The following answer might be given to this good mother: "The best support for you is Allah and you can make good use of your child's love of play. It helps the child to form elevated moral standards. Through playing, a child learns how to cooperate with others, deny himself for the sake of beauty, keep persevering, be modest when he/she wins, be patient when he loses... etc. Having such elevated attributes, he feels self-satisfied and self-confident in a manner that enables him to adapt himself to the conditions of his community.

There are some points that can help the child to enhance his ability to innovate when playing such as:

Playing helps in forming mature social behavior through a child's dealing with others.

By means of playing, children learn to concede some of their toys to the group. Thus, their attention centers on the group instead of themselves as individuals. A child learns to

share playing experiences with his/her peers and cooperate with them. In this way, his tendency to be selfish and aggressive decreases.

The family plays an important role by the toys they provide for their children. If done wisely, this may alleviate aggression between brothers and sisters. Moreover, toys may contribute to children's useful exploitation of their energy.

Team games play a significant role in a child's learning desirable qualities, such as give-and-take, cooperation, patience, love and sincere affection...etc.

There are still many questions raised by parents and teachers concerning childhood development and the answer to them is simply "playing". This means that if utilized correctly, 'play' can lead the next generation to manliness, invention, morality...etc.

## **Your Child Loves His/Her Beautiful Language**

There is no doubt that a child who does not learn his/her own language at an early age, is a weak person of poor thinking since thought and language are two faces of the same coin. Both are indispensable. Through language, children accept religious and moral principles at an early stage. Like adults, they can understand existing values and absorb important traditions, as language is the effective means of receiving such experiences.



Taking this into account, we face a big crisis. In general our children hate the Arabic language and grammar in particular. They can even master a foreign language with the support of their parents. They might even come to love it more than their native tongue. How can this problem be solved and how can we convince our children to love and cherish their own language?

In order to make our children love their mother tongue and take pride in mastering it, we must present it in a lovable and

attractive manner. As children love playing, the best form through which we can introduce Arabic to them is through play. How can this be done?

There is a kind of games called "linguistic games" that make language their target, and use it as a method and a means. They are amusing and educational games at the same time. While practicing them, a child feels very pleased and satisfied. When he finishes playing, he obtains several benefits. This kind of game includes phrases consisting of discordant words whose pronunciation and repetition are joyfully practiced by children like:

*"ghorbal gharbelna beeh, wa ghorbal ma gharbelna beeh, Ta'ala ya sheikh el-megharbileen gharbel bel ghorbal elli ma gharbelna beeh"* which means ( There are two sieves. We used one of them and did not use the other. Oh, head of sieve dealers, come to use the sieve that we did not use).

Such a game is greatly loved by children and widespread among the children of many nations and peoples. In order to realize the importance of linguistic games and its significance to children, let's have a look at its goals as represented in the following points:

**First:** Individuals, children in particular, come to love their language and interact with it more effectively by means of playing with it.

**Second:** They acquire new vocabulary and grammar in an easy and desirable way.

**Third:** They correctly use their stock of grammar and vocabulary obtained through reading, writing and speaking.

Based on these goals, linguistic playing is the original method to interact with language and perceive its rhetoric and beauty. It helps individuals to revive and activate their linguistic ability for better expression. This kind of playing is supported by providing learning opportunities and conscious family supervision.

## Your Child Is Intelligent

One day, I met a friend, who looked distracted and preoccupied. He was thinking about a complex problem. I approached him, greeted him and asked, "What's up, pal? Is there anything I can do to help?"



He said with a look full of surprise, "Do you ask me while you are to blame?"

Being wonder-stuck, I asked, "How come? I try to help you as much as I can!"

He went on saying sadly: "Do you remember when we last met? At that time you told me about a home library and its importance and benefits. Having been persuaded and influenced by your advice," he continued, "I hurried to a bookshop to bring a good book to start my library. Soon, I spotted a worthy book and bought it at once. When I went home, I found a surprise!"

Feeling confused, I asked, "What is the name of this book? What was the surprise? Tell me what happened!"

He answered, "It is 'The Intelligent.' It was written by Ibnul-Jawziyya, (may Allah Bless him). I bought this book on

account of this famous author. The theme of the book is of a particular interest to me, as I often need it for the education of my children. Anyhow, I told my wife that I brought her a treasury of knowledge. She was so pleased with the book that she thought it would help us develop our children's way of thinking. Then, we started reading the book."

I keenly asked, "What happened after that." He answered, "We found in that book some interesting tales about the intelligent and their good way of thinking. For instance, we read that when Allah's Messenger (PBUH) emigrated (to Madeenah), he and Abu Bakr As-Sideeq, (may Allah be pleased with him), hid in the Cave. When they went out and resumed their journey, some people who knew Abu Bakr quite well, asked him: "Who is accompanying you, Abu Bakr? He answered, "He is a guide who shows me the way." By saying that, Abu Bakr did not lie. At the same time, he did not tell the truth because if he had done so, the *Hijra* (emigration) journey would have failed. Here, Abu Bakr used a pun.

We read another episode which ran to the following effect: Al-'Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, (may Allah be pleased with him), was asked if he was older than the Prophet (PBUH). He replied, "He is older than me but I was born before him." He thus showed politeness towards Allah's Messenger (PBUH) who is greater than anyone else. At the same time, Al-'Abbas told the truth when he said he was born before the Prophet (PBUH). We also read this incident. One night, while 'Umar bin Al Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), was patrolling Madeenah, he saw a fire lit in a tent. He stopped and called, "Oh, people of light." He hated to say 'people of fire.' This is a high level of intelligence.



The point is that when we finished reading and enjoyed that journey to the world of the intelligent and their tales and anecdotes, my wife asked me a bewildering question with which I have been preoccupied since." I said, "What was that question, pray tell?" He said, "My wife commented, "All these tales are beautiful and wonderful but may I ask you how we can help our children become like them?" My friend then said, "I have not yet found an answer to this question."

At that moment, I felt that I was obliged to help my friend answer this significant question. I said, "Calm down! If we are faithful to Allah and serious about assisting our children, we will find it very easy. The answer to this question is summed up in one word, namely 'playing,' as it is the best means of helping our kids to be intelligent."

My friend said excitedly, "Are you making fun of me by saying that 'playing' is the solution?" I explained, "I swear I'm not mocking you, pal. I repeat: the best method of developing our children's intelligence is playing because it stimulates their thoughts and activates their minds. One type of playing is what we call 'riddles'. In order to be sure that this kind of playing is effective, let me tell you that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) used it with his good Companions, the young and the old alike. *Imam Ahmad* states in his *Saheeh* ' an accurate book containing many of the Prophet's *Hadiths*' that Ibnu 'Umar, (may Allah be pleased with him), narrated that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said to his Companions: " Tell me about a tree that looks like a believer." They started to mention some kinds of trees that grow in the desert. Ibnu 'Umar said: It occurred to my mind that it was palm tree. I was about to answer but the presence of older people

prevented me from replying. When nobody gave the right answer, Allah's Messenger said, "It is the palm tree."



"Moreover," I went on, "there are many other games which develop your children's intelligence like sports because a healthy body helps form a good mind. Assembling and installing games like cubes are also useful as well as linguistic games for language is one of the basic elements of creative thinking.

At that moment, my friend said happily, "I get it! Playing is the solution." He then looked at me and said, "Thank you, pal, for your clarification and sorry for any absurd things I might have said. I was so preoccupied with my children's education." He then looked at his watch and said, "Excuse me, I am late. I have to go home to see my wife and children. I have to leave now to play some of these games with my kids and I promise you to start with that nice riddle voiced by the Prophet (PBUH)."

## Your Child is a Little Champion

Our true religion of Islam calls for interest in our children's education through various kinds of sports, as Allah says, ﴿Prepare to them (the enemies) as much power as you can.﴾ And His Messenger said, ﴿Allah favors and loves a strong believer more than a weak one.﴾ Thus, sports practiced by children are considered part of Islam's educational methodology. Sport helps children have strong bodies and accustoms them to exert effort and face hardships patiently.



As we talk about the role of sport in our children's lives, it is important here to ponder on the message of 'Umar bin Al Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), to the people of the Levant (now Syria, Lebanon and Palestine) in which he says, "Teach your children swimming, shooting and horse-riding." This message indicates that Islam pays particular attention to these three sports since they greatly contribute to a child's physical, psychological and emotional make up. They make a hero of him when he fights enemies, a generous, gallant person when he deals with others and a strong man when he is faced by life's problems.

## Swimming

Swimming does not mean those usual competitions coupled with financial prizes. This is a good and useful strategy, but what we mean is that kind which represents an aspect of chivalry and a symbol of cooperation and physical and psychological fitness. A child becomes a good citizen, and a well-prepared fighter when he is called to the battlefield.

Since swimming in this sense, -has a significant importance in the life of Muslims in general and Muslim children in particular, At-Tabarani, accurately narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "*All deeds lacking in praise of Allah are considered pastime and distraction except for four things: Endeavors of shooting, care for one's horse, being nice with one's family and learning to swim.*" Moreover, swimming was particularly important according to Al-Hajjaj's view. He advised his children's tutor saying, "Teach them how to swim before you teach them how to write, as they can depend on others in writing, but never in swimming."

## Shooting

We will not talk too much about how our children learn various kinds of shooting. Rather, we will listen to our teacher and exemplar, Muhammad (PBUH) with the objective of following his decent behavior. Let's pay special attention to our Prophet's eternal speech that stresses the importance of learning to shoot in the early years of one's life.



*Imam* Muslim narrated in his *Sahih* that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) recited the following verse, "Prepare to them (the enemies) as much power as you can" and said, "Power is shooting, power is shooting."

*Imams* Ahmad and Al-Bukhari narrate that the Prophet (PBUH) passed some people who were training in shooting (javelin throwing) and said, "Shoot, children of Ismaeel. Your forefather was a (skillful) shooter. Shoot and I support the children of so and so." At that moment, one of the competing teams stopped shooting. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) then said, "Why are you not shooting?" The team said: 'How can we shoot while you side with the children of so and so. Then he said, "Shoot, I'm a supporter of you all." Muslim also narrated that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "Shoot and ride (horses); but shooting is more to my liking than riding. He who learned shooting then forgets it doesn't belong to us" or "abuses such a blessing" in another version of the *Hadith*.

When we listen carefully to these Prophetic teachings, read them with faithful hearts, then apply them with sincere determination and pure intentions, we can mold our children into men like Anasu ibn Malik, (may Allah be pleased with him), who learned and mastered shooting at the Prophet's (PBUH) school and then strove to transfer his experience that he drew from Allah's Messenger (PBUH) to the new generation. At-Tabarani is reported by reliable men to have narrated that "Anasu ibn Malik, (may Allah be pleased with him), used to sit on a cloth on the ground and watch his children while they were shooting. One day, he went out while they were shooting and said: Oh, my children, bad shooting.' Then he took the bow and shot. He never missed the target."

## Horse-Riding

When we contemplate the early Prophetic meetings and live with the Companions of Allah's Messenger (PBUH), we realize how important it is for our children to learn horse-riding. Al-Zahri mentions that "the Companions of Allah's Messenger (PBUH) held races in horse-riding,



camel-riding and running since they needed such sports in *jihad* operations. So, learning horse-riding is most favorable."

Since our master 'Umar bin Al Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), was one of those who were raised to be excellent horsemen in the Prophet's (PBUH) school, he wrote to the people of the provinces saying, "... Teach your children swimming, horsemanship, proverbs and good poetry" and "order them to master horse-riding" in another version.

Hence, if we succeed in implanting the love of sport in our children's hearts and guide them carefully and practically to master swimming, shooting and horse-riding they, Allah willing, will conquer laziness and apathy and advance towards the road to heroism, glory and honor, fearing no one but Allah. At that time, the enemies of Islam will learn that the Muslim nation has prepared itself militarily, physically and psychologically, being motivated by faith and *jihad*. Then, these enemies will be defeated by worry and fear before they will be defeated in the battlefield. This is what the Messenger (PBUH) indicated when he said, "*I have scored an early victory (over the enemies) as they are filled with horror one month before I come to them.*"

## Your Child Is an Innovator

Imaginative games are a starting point towards innovation. These games accompany children in the early years of their lives and help them innovate. Hence, some thinkers call them 'innovative games.'



When you see your son sitting on a pillow, imagining that it is a horse and that he is a horseman; and when he insists to be treated as a pilot, a horseman or a doctor, you should learn that it is the first step towards creativity. So you must help him pass this stage by means of encouragement, praise and participation.

Similarly, when you see your daughter carrying a doll, talking and playing tenderly with her, then making the bed for her in a gentle, compassionate way and putting her to sleep peacefully; and when you see your daughter bringing food and water to her doll, you should learn that she is progressing towards creativity. At that time, you must share in her imagination and encourage her with praise and rewards.

Imaginary play has a great role in developing a child's mind and his (her) way of thinking. Hence, Islam favors this kind of playing and urges children to practice it. Abu Dawoud accurately narrated that A'isha, (may Allah be pleased with her)

said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) came from the battle of Tabuk or Hunain while a wind was blowing and raising the cloth cover of my locker that contained my dolls. When he (PBUH) saw the dolls, he said, *'What are these A'isha?'* "My dolls," I said. There was a horse with two wings of cloth among the toys. Then, he said, *"What is this toy among them?"* "A horse," I said. *"What are these with it?"* he (PBUH) said. "Two wings," I replied. *"A horse with two wings?"* he (PBUH) said. "Haven't you heard that Solomon possessed horses with wings?" I said. At that moment, he (PBUH) laughed."

*Al-Shaiykh* (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) and Abu Dawoud narrate that A'isha, (may Allah be pleased with her), said, "I used to play with my dolls in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). Once, my friends and I were playing with the dolls and then they hid when they saw Allah's Messenger (PBUH). But he (PBUH) called them back to play with me once again."

In addition to the above mentioned situations that encourage children to use their imagination, our generous teacher, Allah's Messenger (PBUH) set a good example to parents as to how to facilitate their children's imaginary play. Abu Ya'la and other reliable men narrated that 'Umar bin Al Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, "I saw Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, (may Allah be pleased with them), mounting the shoulders of the Prophet (PBUH). Then, I said, 'What a noble horse you are mounting!' Next, he (PBUH) said, *'What noble horsemen they are!'* Furthermore, At-Tabarani narrated that Jabir, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, " I visited the Prophet (PBUH) while he was walking on his hands and knees, carrying Al-Hassan and



Al-Hussein, (may Allah be pleased with them), on his back and saying, *'What a noble camel yours is, and what noble equals you are!'*"

Let's ponder on this environment which is full of love and compassion and in which the best of all creatures (PBUH) shares this fun imaginary play with Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein and, moreover, encourages them to continue playing powerfully and enthusiastically when he said, *"What noble horsemen they are!"* .... *"What a noble camel yours is, and what noble equals you are."* Hence, they were provided with psychological nutrition, a learning atmosphere, and were prepared for the future by means of marvelous imaginary play with the master of the Prophets and Messengers, Muhammad (PBUH).

## Who Do our Children Play with?

A friend of mine said to me one day: "It is good to talk about playing; its importance and its benefits, but there is a question that bewilders me: Who should my child play with. Is it better to play with his/her equals or with adults like us?"

I said to him: Let's explore this matter together. If we find that a child's playing with his brothers, sisters and friends is more useful, we will guide our children to play with them. And if we find our children's playing with adults is more useful, we will come down to their ages and play with them.

### **First: Children play with their counterparts**

The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) watched children playing together and did not blame them, rather he amused them. At-Tabarani narrated that Jabir, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, "While we were going with Allah's Messenger (PBUH) to respond to a dinner invitation, Al-Hussein was playing with other boys. Then, the Prophet (PBUH) hurried up and stretched his hands to catch him while he was running here and there. Allah's Messenger (PBUH) amused his grandson till he caught him, putting one hand on his chin and the other between his head and ears, then embraced and kissed him. Next he said, *'Hussein is part of me and I am part of him. Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein are the Prophet's grandsons; Allah loves him who loves*

them." *Al-Shaiykan* and Abu Dawoud narrated that A'isha, (may Allah be pleased with her), said, "I used to play with my dolls in the presence of the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). Once, my friends and I were playing with the dolls and then they hid when they saw Allah's Messenger (PBUH). But he called them back to play with me once again."



When we examine these two incidents, we realize how important it is for a child to play with his/her peers since he/she obtains self-confidence and learns to trust his young friends during this process. He neither doubts them nor does he treat them aggressively. In addition, a child's participation with his peers in playing decreases his dependence on adults and provides him with active amusement. This, in turn, enables him to select the suitable method for achieving his real and imaginary demands with others. Hence, he acquires the basis of a socially cooperative life that will benefit him in the years to come.

Still we must select those whom our children can play with on sound grounds. They must be truthful, decent and well-mannered persons, as called for by Ibn Seena when he said, "When a child stays in his kuttab (Qur'an lower elementary school), he must be in the company of well-behaved, polite children since they teach, imitate and like the company of each other."

## **Second: Children play with adults**

When children play with adults, including their parents and teachers it encourages them to listen to their directives and respond to their demands out of love and persuasion. Playing also increases a child's love for them. The child believes that being isolated from them is harsher than blaming and beating. Further, children love playing with adults as they feel self-confident and loved by all. This leads them to feel secure. Moreover, a child's playing with others provides him with many beautiful qualities and good manners, urges him to obey his parents and respect his teachers, and makes him used to modesty, mercy, tenderness and leniency.

Thus, we find that the Prophet (PBUH), our example and model, incites adults to play with children. He himself (PBUH) played with children. Al-Bazzar narrated that Sa'ad bin abi-Waqqas, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, "I visited the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) while Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein were playing on his belly. Then I said, 'Oh, Messenger of Allah, do you love them?' He said, '*How can I not love them and they are my sweet basils!*'" Imam Ahmad narrated that Abdullah bin Al-Harith, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, "The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) used to line up Abdullah, 'Ubaidullah and many of Al-'Abbas' children, (may Allah be pleased with them), and say: "*He who reaches me first, will get so and so.*" Then they raced towards him, touching his back and chest, to be kissed and embraced by him."

While we appreciate adults playing with children, we must caution them against some mistakes made by some parents and teachers. While playing, they may behave carelessly or utter

indecent words, thinking that it would be considered a sort of joking and that children are too preoccupied with laughter and merriment to pay attention to such acts and words. In so doing they unconsciously misguide their children since a child picks up all our words and actions and records them like a radar. He even monitors our smiles, whispers and looks and tries to imitate and apply them till they become his habits and morals.

Hence, while playing with our children, we must be careful of our words, fulfill our promises, be truthful and seek good and beauty in all our activities. This was understood by Al-Jahiz when he said, " When 'Uqba ibn abi- Sufyan sent his sons to an educator, he said to him: The first thing you must start with for mending my sons is to mend your self as their eyes are bound to yours. What you see as good or bad will be their exact view."

### **How to choose suitable toys for your child**

Motivated by love and compassion, most parents rush to buy their children as many toys as they can, hoping that this great number of toys will give them much joy and pleasure while playing. But has a parent asked himself: Why did I choose this toy in particular? Is it suitable for my child? How can he (she) make use of it? What are its good and bad effects?



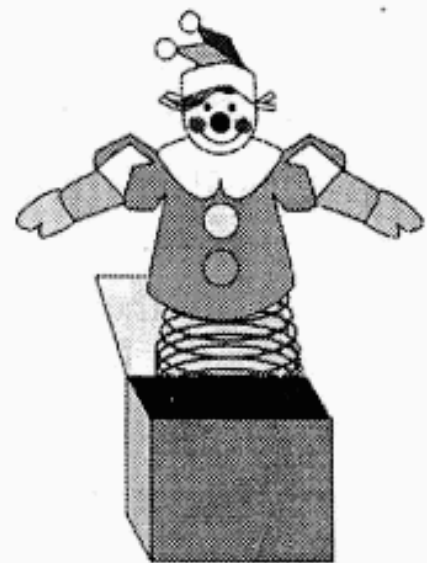
Since we generally do not ask ourselves such questions, we may bring our children some toys that are of no use to them or may even do harm to them. So, it is important to become acquainted with the features of a useful toy. It should be:

### **a) Suitable for the child's age and ability**

Psychological studies indicate that children differ physically, mentally, emotionally and culturally. So, suitable toys that meet children's needs are relative. We must select toys that are suitable to our children's mind, age and background. If a toy is very simple, it may make them bored; and if it is very sophisticated, it may cause them to be disappointed and feel low self-esteem. Such disappointment may lead them to be aggressive towards the toy or other children. Hence, a good toy is the one that suits a child, develops his/her abilities and makes him joyful, cheerful and ready and willing to learn.

### **b) Attractive to children**

A good toy is the one that seizes a child's attention and attracts him/her to keep it for a long time. A good toy also develops a child's curiosity when it is sophisticated, obscure or colorful. These aspects cause children to interact with their toys and keep playing with them. In this way, a toy will achieve good results and the child will become closer to the person who brought him the toy, thinking that he presented him with a precious gift.



### **c) Related to the child's environment**

It is important to note that a child's culture directs him/her to practice a specific set of games. These games are closely related

to his environment and community. There are games pertaining to children of the countryside; others relating to the children of cities; others associated to the children of the desert...etc. These games are automatically transferred from one generation to another since they conform to the child's reality. Hence, a good game is the one that suits and closely relates to the child's reality. We must be conscious of the western games that contradict our values and beliefs, distort our children's method of thinking and strip them of their culture and religion.

Alongside the above three conditions that must be provided in the toys we buy for our children, there is still a group of scientific bases that can help us select the best, most useful and effective toys. We can sum them up in the following points:

### **Psychological bases**

Satisfying children's motives and psychological needs, such as freedom, order, security, disassembly and assembly, and leadership and gathering.

Preparing children to be able to learn, understand and thus develop their inclinations and desires.

Providing them with opportunities to express their needs and likes.

### **Mental bases**

These bases must urge children to develop their mental and cognitive abilities. They include:

Developing the ability to comprehend and understand

Developing and training the senses on cognition and reasoning

Providing chances to invent and innovate

Enhancing children's ability to predict outcomes

### **Social bases**

Observing the balance between individual and collective activities

Encouraging sympathy, solidarity and competitiveness

Facilitating the performance of social roles

Helping to shift from individual passive practices to collective positive activities

### **Hygienic bases**

Being free of dangerous edges, points and cracks that may hurt or scratch children

Making sure that the toy is not too heavy for the children  
Checking that the toys that can be mounted, are stable and balanced

Having toys made of non-flammable materials

Avoiding toys that contain small pieces that can be easily swallowed, inhaled or put into ears

Being sure that no painted toys have toxic substances

### **Aesthetic basis**

Having toys that are symmetrical in shape, beautiful in design and close to reality

Selecting toys with attractive and stimulating colors

Making sure that toys have aesthetic goals (psychological, moral or behavioral)



Through the points mentioned above, the following questions can be raised and through these questions we can determine if a toy is suitable for our children:

Questions

Yes

No

- 1- Does it suit the child's mental, physical and intellectual level?
- 2- Is it attractive?
- 3- Is it related to our culture, religion and morals?
- 4- Is it free of poisonous and destructive ideas and substances?
- 5- Does it provide him with opportunities to invent and innovate?
- 6- Does it help him to sympathize, unite and compete with others? Does it transfer him from individual work to group activities?
- 7- Is it safe?
- 8- Does it have an atheistic goal (psychological, behavioral or moral)?

N.B.

When six answers are answered with 'yes' including questions one, four and seven, you can safely buy this toy.

## Sound Playing

When we advocate children to learn through play, we must encourage parents to provide their children with chances of playing and having fun and urge them to take part in their children's activities. We are talking about the kind of play that conforms to Islamic fundamentals and morals. These morals were implanted by the Companions and our pious predecessors (may Allah be pleased with them all), in their children's hearts. Our pious forefathers applied decency while they were sharing happy activities with their children. Playing was their means towards the best education and cultivation. We today, want to follow in their footsteps and restore their glory, so we must instill these fundamentals and morals into the spirits of our children through good speech, wisdom and meaningful participation.

The first step towards this goal, for parents and teachers is to review these fundamentals and morals, praying that Allah May Help us.

### **Faithful intention**

The *Amir* of the Believers, Hafsa's father, 'Umar bin Al-Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saying, "*Deeds depend on intentions*

*and everyone has his own intentions. He who emigrated (to Madeenah) for the cause of Allah and His Messenger, he will be rewarded for that. And he who emigrated for worldly pleasures or to get married to a certain woman, he will be rewarded for that.*" (narrated by Muslim and Al-Bukhari).

It is to be noted that Al-Bukhari began his most famous book with this tradition and used it as a preface to indicate that any deed that does not target Allah's favor, will be worthless in both this world and the hereafter. It was narrated that Ash-Sha'fi said, "This tradition is one third of knowledge and is linked to seventy topics of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence)." *Imam Ahmad* said, "The Fundamentals of Islam are built on three traditions at the top of which comes the one of "Deeds depend on intentions..."

Hence, it is necessary to raise our children to be faithful to Allah in all aspects of life including play. Thus, their habits become acts of worship.

We can implant many intentions into the hearts of our children as they play. For instance, we play to amuse ourselves after long hours of study. Playing also helps us to actively and persistently resume our study. Furthermore, we practice sports to develop strong, healthy bodies enabling us to perform the duties ordained by Allah like *salah* (prayers), *jihad* and earning a living...etc. Moreover, playing helps us to invent and create, thus contributing to the progress and pride of our nation. In addition, we play because the Messenger of Allah (PBUH), our example and model, urged children to play, and he playing with them. Besides, when we play we meet new friends and have form amicable and cooperative relations with them. Through playing with friends, we cooperate in doing good deeds, such as going to

the mosque as soon as the call to prayer is announced, assisting the poor and giving a hand to the needy.

### **Islamic sportsmanship**

One day, I was watching a group of children playing football. To my surprise, they were shouting and calling one another names. No sooner had one of them touched the ball, than the other children cried out, either for applause, objection, mere shouting and cursing or claiming their right to play.



I talked to myself: 'Our children, for sure, were not born with this behavior. Rather, they were born, like others, as soft dough easy to be shaped. But they opened their eyes to find a society whose members shout at the top of their voices more than anything else. Those children picked up our own defects and inherited them to give them in turn one day to their own offspring. This is a collective crime that must distress us more than anything else.'

While I was thinking of a way out of this quagmire, the tradition narrated by *Imam Ahmad* and *Al-Bukhari* about *Anas*, (may Allah be pleased with him), came to my mind. He said: The Prophet (PBUH) had a superior, strong, fast she-camel called *Al-Adhbaa*. She was indeed faster than their counterparts. Once a Bedouin riding a strong young she-camel outdistanced her. Being shocked, the Muslims said, 'Al-Adhbaa was outstripped.' Then the Prophet (PBUH) said: "*Allah ordains that the great status of any worldly thing be lowered one day.*" I pondered this tradition

for a long time till I realized that the Prophet (PBUH) and his good Companions presented us with a practical lesson and a real solution to the problem involved in this incident. In the midst of the race, all eyes were focused on Al-Adhbaa, hoping that it would win and outstrip her competitor. But Allah predetermined that she would not win. Here we find that the polite Companions neither uttered an indecent word nor gave an unsuitable gesture. They were only shocked and sad and commented: 'Al-Adhbaa was outstripped'. Also we find the master of the Prophets (PBUH) teaching his Companions, and us after them, a splendid lesson of good manners and decency when he, the owner of the losing competitor said, "Allah ordains that the great status of any worldly thing be lowered one day."

This is a valuable piece of wisdom that calls upon Muslims, young and old, not to be biased. It is a call to what is known today as sportsmanship or rather 'Islamic sportsmanship' that views victory as a grace and a blessing from Allah and defeat as Allah's destiny and wisdom. Sportsmanship takes morals as a slogan, tolerance as a method and brotherhood and love as a basis. Oh, parents! We still have the solution, may Allah Grant us success. Let's return with our children to this Islamic sportsmanship that adds beauty and feasibility to playing and turns it to a principal educational means as it was in the case in the era of the Prophet (PBUH) and his faithful Companions.

### **Say 'No' to betting**

Our children may be so enthusiastic that one may tell another: Let's race provided that the loser gives the winner a certain amount of money or a prize. Each of them may even

place an equal amount of money and he who wins gets it all. This sort of betting is prohibited in Islam.

A question is raised here: Are all kinds of betting prohibited? In fact, Islam excludes betting aimed at providing weaponry for *jihad*; such as betting for the sake of obtaining camels and horses, mastering shooting or any other military tactics. *Ashabus-Sunan* and *Imam Ahmad* narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "*Betting is prohibited unless it is for a hoof (meaning camels and horses) and arrows.*" But betting rewards must be given here by one competitor only or any other people. This is considered a sort of encouragement, like granting public posts, either for the sake of military training as in shooting or sporting excellence as in wrestling, football...etc. As further evidence of the legality of such betting, *Imam Ahmad* narrated that *Ibnu 'Umar*, (may Allah be pleased with him) and his father, said: The Prophet (PBUH) held horse racing competitions and rewarded the winners.



Hence we, parents and teachers, must explain this point to our children and warn them against illegal betting. We must also encourage them to practice legal betting, so that they can have strong bodies and generous characters. Don't harm yourself or others

Our children usually enjoy playing with animals and birds. You may see one of them accompany a cat or a sparrow and exchange love and sincere affection with it. You may even see him (her) talk with it or tell it a tale. This is good and useful for children since they acquire self-confidence and boldness through

playing with these creatures. Moreover, they get accustomed to benevolence and generosity through feeding, watering and caring for them.

In the midst of children's joy and gaiety while playing with animals and birds, we should not forget the noble Prophetic principle saying, "Don't harm yourself or others." Children must not play with animals like dogs that may hurt them. A dog may bite a child or drool over his/her body and clothes, thus spreading diseases.. Moreover, when a child brings a dog to his house, the Angels do not enter such a house and consequently it will be deprived of good, mercy and prosperity. *Imam Al-Bukhari* narrated in his *Saheeh* that *Salem* narrated that his father said, "Jibreel promised the Prophet (PBUH) to visit him but he was too late and the Prophet (PBUH) became so sad. He then went out and met Jibreel and expressed sorrow over his absence. But Jibreel said, "We (Angels) do not enter a house which contains a statue or a dog."

*Imam Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani* elaborates this tradition as follows: "Jibreel promised the Prophet (PBUH) to visit him... A'isha added, "At a time he used to come to him," as stated in *Muslim's Sahih*. A'isha also added, "He (Jibreel ) did not come at the fixed time." The phrase "... and the Prophet (PBUH) was so sad" is replaced, according to A'isha's narration, by " He (the Prophet) threw a stick that he was catching and said, " Allah and His Messenger never break Their promises." In a third narration stated by *Maimouna* and included in *Muslim's Sahih*, she said, "He became depressed." Then comes the phrase "The Prophet (PBUH) went out and met Jibreel and expressed his sorrow" i.e. over his delay.

The shortened phrase "We (Angels) do not enter a house which contains a statue or a dog" is prolonged in A'isha's narration to include, "Then he (the Prophet) looked around to see a puppy under the bed. He said: Oh, A'isha, when did this dog come here? She said: I swear I didn't see it. Then he ordered that the dog be taken out of the house. As Jibreel came once again, he (the Prophet) said: *I have been waiting for you since you promised me, but you didn't come.* He (Jibreel ) said: The dog in your house prevented me from coming."



There are still other aspects of harm that must be considered when children play with animals and birds. They may, for instance, be so involved in playing that they may forget the *salah* (prayers), study or any other duties. It is narrated that Shuraiyh had a son who was fond of playing with dogs. Once, he was so busy playing with them that he forgot the *salah*. Seeing this incident, Shuraiyh wrote to his son's tutor some lines of poetry whose meaning runs to the following effect: He (the son) didn't perform the *salah* for the sake of playing and jumping with those seducing, filthy dogs. When you are alone, blame him and give him a piece of advice you are used to give to smart, skillful people. And if you are determined to beat him, whip him three times only. Please be sure that my son is the dearest of all, though he deserves punishment for the troubles he caused me.

As we are interested in our children's safety when they play with animals and birds, we, similarly, must guarantee that our



children do not harm them either by beating, confining or killing. The Two *Sahihs* state that Ibnu 'Umar, (may Allah be pleased with him and his father), passed a group of boys from Quriesh who put birds on a high place and shot them with arrows. Alas, wrong shots were directed to the owner of the birds. When the boys saw Ibnu 'Umar, they disappeared. He then said: Who did that? Allah damns those who act like this. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) also damns those who set a creature as a target for arrow throwing.

## Our Children Love Playing and Dislike Study

One day, having known that his children got low marks for the end-of-term exam, one of my friends said to me: 'What can I do for them more than I have done? I cared so much for them. I sat with them for long hours, ordering them to study and stop playing. I watched them so closely, to the extent that they spent most of their time in the company of their books, being preoccupied with study and hard work. Playing had no place in their life. What happened then? I am confused and tired. What should I do?'



I was caught by surprise and said: 'May Allah reward you for this great effort, but may I tell you the main reason behind your children's poor school performance and low marks?' He was surprised and said: 'What are you saying? Can a father do harm to his children, who are the dearest thing in his life? You aren't aware of what you have said, for sure.' 'Don't be angry, pal,' I responded. 'Let's discuss the matter quietly.'

"Children have an instinct to play. We can count playing as one of childhood's requisites. How can you then, deprive them of a necessity at the same time as you ask them to be excellent?"

Acting in this way, you unconsciously make them hate study. You deprive them of something they love and need, telling them they must study instead of play."

My friend! Playing and study are two faces of the same coin that must be kept together. There is a close link between a child's playing and his (her) school and moral progress. Playing is not a time-killing tool as much as an activity through which a child disposes of tiredness after study or laziness after sleep. Playing represents another stage after which he (she) becomes more able to study satisfactorily and understand after he gets his share of innocent pleasures. He thus becomes readier to interact with life and study and work harder.

In this context, *Imam Al-Ghazali*, (may Allah Put mercy on him) said, "When a child finishes his class at the *Kuttab*, he must be allowed to play and amuse himself but not in a violent way. Preventing the child from playing, and teaching him too much always make him less merciful and intelligent and can even drive him to reject learning once and for all."

Ibnu Maskouba reiterated the same meaning when he said, "A child must be allowed to play in a nice way to be relieved of toil while involved in seeking knowledge. He must neither feel pain nor be extremely tired while playing."

At this moment my friend commented: "You mean that playing has an important role in a child's life as a legitimate outlet for his (her) vast resources of energy, a means of expressing his deep emotions and an acceptable way of amusement, pleasure and happiness. Through playing, the child's abilities of thinking, memorizing and understanding are developed. You also mean that when we deprive the child of

playing on the pretext of not wasting study time, this causes him to be bad at school and to be in a continual state of worry, confusion and dissatisfaction."

I said to him: "This is exactly what I mean. This is the undisputed truth that led modern psychologists to say: 'The teaching that takes place during a child's early years does not bear fruit, or be accepted nor endured by him/her unless it is accompanied by games.' We need an educational method whose outer shape calls for play and amusement, while learning, and education and hard work are included in this content. The main reason why our children dislike study may be attributed to the lack of such a principle in our current educational systems that are badly designed, do not address the nature of children and exhaust their physical and mental energy. Furthermore, they force them to study boring material as if they are sentenced to some years of hard labor.

My friend then added: "May Allah Help our children! I did not feel such suffering when I was young, but I have their best interests at heart.. What should I do? Shall I impose no restrictions on them, letting them to play and rejoice as they like? What else can I do?"

I replied: "Children's play must not be at the expense of other duties. For instance, they should not spend most of their time playing football, swimming or building figures of blocks, because of Allah's Orders of worship, parents' rights to obedience and good treatment and their efforts to study and seek knowledge. Children's play must be balanced with their other obligations, as stated by the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) when he said to Abdullah bin 'Amro ibnu-'Aas, " *Oh, Abdullah ibnu 'Amr,*

*Allah, your body and your family have rights over you; so give them their own rights."*

At this moment my friend said: "May Allah Reward you! I think matters are clear now and need no more discussion. I must leave to apply what we have been talking about. May Allah Help us."

### **Does your child play with earth?**

When you see your child playing with earth, it is quite likely that you stop him and order him not to do such a thing again. In this situation, you are certainly interested in your child's health and his personal cleanliness. Your belief that earth



is harmful to children was shared by the Companions, (may Allah be pleased with them), till the Prophet (PBUH) corrected this concept and taught them that earth has many benefits. At-Tabarani narrated that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) passed a group of children who were playing with earth. Some of the Prophet's Companions told them to stop playing, but he said, "*Leave them! The earth is a real amusement to children.*" The earth we mean here is that one devoid of germs and insects, not the one we find in modern day streets.

Oh, good parent, don't think that your child's playing with earth or mud lessens his (her)intelligence or lowers his status. Actually, it is quite the opposite. Your child's playing with earth and mud develops his mind, enhances his way of thinking and gives him self-confidence. You will be more reassured if you learn that a child who was playing with mud helped *Imam Abu*

Haneefa, (may Allah be pleased with him), to change the course of his life. Let's read about this incident: It was narrated that *Imam* Abu Haneefa saw a child playing with mud and said to him: 'Take care or you will fall into the mud.' But the boy said to the Imam: 'You, be cautious, or you will fall, as when a scholar stumbles, he does great harm to the masses.' Having listened to this piece of advice, Abu Haneefa never gave a *fatwa* (a religious opinion) except after one-month deliberations with his followers on the issue in question.

When we follow and watch children, we find they are inclined to dig in the earth or play with mud, dough, sand and so on. Should we ignore this tendency or consider its benefits?

If we ignore this instinct and do not guide it, it will become of no use. It was said that, "this instinct should be provided with suitable tools and good orientation in order that it may be turned from mere useless playing to another type full of observation, invention and good thinking."

We may say that playing with earth may involve some harm, but it is still a favorite activity for children. So, we should leave them to spend some time playing with earth to satisfy their needs and give vent to their extra energy by means of practicing something containing more good than harm. We can provide our children with suitable chances when they accompany us to beaches and let them play with sand and form houses, pyramids and other figures. If this is not available, we could make them a sand box and place it in a certain place in the house where the child will be safe and secure.

What do you think of this incident?

Once summer, when Ahmad was seven years old, his father took him to the beach to enjoy the fresh air and amuse himself for a while. On the



beach, Ahmad fulfilled his wish that could have been difficult to realize in their small, modest home. He made statues of the Sphinx and the Pyramids, then removed them to form figures of animals. Filled with joy and happiness, he went on playing. He then called to his mother to see what he had made and invented. When she approached him, he said: 'What do you think of this pretty lion?' The mother shared her son's pleasure and encouraged him to continue and produce better models. Ahmad then called to his father to see what he made. The father left his comfortable seat with slow steps and looked at the heap of sand piled up by his son and quickly went back to his seat to lie down after he told Ahmad off and ordered him to give up this childish behavior, pointing out that what he made was a mere heap of sand bearing no resemblance to a lion. However, Ahmad did not stop and made a statue of his dear cat and called to his father once more to see his new invention. As the father's contempt for his son's inventions grew more fierce this time, Ahmad felt depressed and worried. With a feeling of low self-confidence he put his shovel aside and fell asleep.

What do you think of this father? Was he right to rebuke his son for his childish behavior as he said? Or was the mother right in encouraging her son to continue playing and praising him?

Notice that you will be committed to adopt and apply the right opinion with your child in such a situation.

## Let's Play

### First: Linguistic Games

#### A) Games to improve verbal communication

Children often have problems with pronunciation during their early years. For instance, a child, 'talb' instead of 'kalb' (dog), 'yaggel' instead of 'raggel' (man)... Some parents try to redress these problems by asking their children to pronounce the words correctly. The children do their best but often fail and feel disappointed. In this way, we overburden children by asking them to correct each letter they hear in the length of time equal to 1/20 of a second, and mixed with other letters within the same word. In order to overcome these difficulties effectively we should instigate some linguistic games, where we separate the letters from each other and play with one letter apart from the others. Thus, children can understand the origin and nature of each letter and how to pronounce it correctly. All this happens within a framework of play, laughter and merriness.

Here are some of these games that we hope, Allah Willing, will help our children improve their ability to speak:

#### **The sound of "meem" (m)**

Let a child put a forefinger over one of his nostrils, and the other forefinger over the second nostril. Then ask him (her) to



pronounce the sound of "meem" (m) as 'ma ma ma' once, as 'mi mi mi' another time and as 'moo moo moo' a third time. Next, let him pronounce the sound in its three forms respectively 'ma mi moo' ... We can invent other games using the sound of the letter "meem".

### **The sound of "ba'a" (b)**

Give each of your children a thin strip of paper and ask them to put the strips across their mouths in a vertical position by placing one end of the strip under their noses and press them with a finger and let the other end loose under the chin. Then make them say 'bah bah bah' so that the air coming out of their mouths pushes the strip forward. Then let the children imagine that they are steamboats and ask them to go round the room and repeat 'bah bah bah', while blowing the strip with the air coming out of the mouth.

### **The sound of "kaf" (k)**

Let your child imagine that he (she) is a sparrow whose tongue is stuck to the lower row of its jaw in such a way that it can only pronounce the sound 'kah kah kah'. Teach him (her) how to stick his tongue to his lower jaw line by placing the tip of his tongue under his top front teeth.

Then pronounce this sound in front of the child and let him go around the room as if he were a flying sparrow repeating 'kah kah kah'. Make sure that the child's tongue does not move. Listen to the sound he makes and make the necessary corrections.



We can hold a race among the children under the title of "the race of the sparrows" and the one who wins is given a small, simple toy sparrow to remind him of the correct pronunciation of the sound '*kah kah kah*.'

### **The sound of "jeem" (j)**

Tell your children that some people say "aj" for (yes) and "awj" for (No) and then ask them to answer some simple questions using these two words. Then tell them that they always put their hands under their chins when they answer questions. This can help the children feel the produced sound. Next you can give each of them a feather to put in his (her) hair or fasten it on his forehead and practice this game with them through asking them various questions. The one who gets the highest score is awarded a colorful feather that will remind him how to pronounce the letter "jeem".

### **The sound of "fa'a" (f)**

Ask the child to fill his mouth with water and then blow it out of his (her) mouth by means of pronouncing 'f f f.' You can call this game "water spraying."

You can practice this game in a different way. Ask each child to wet a side of his forefinger, put it horizontally on his lower lip and blow the air to produce the sound of 'f f f' till his fingers get cold. You can call this game "cooling fingers." You should feel the children's fingers to make sure that they are cold.

### **The sound of "sheen" (sh/ch)**

This game can be played in two ways:

- 1- Choose one of the children to play the role of a teacher. Tell the other children to repeat a certain sound (of a

letter) many times till the room is full of noise. Here the child (who plays the part of teacher) puts his forefinger on his lips, saying "*hish hish*." The other children repeat '*hish hish*' and then keep silent. Then they do the drill several times till the young



teacher asks them to listen carefully to him (her) as he (she) is going to explain an important lesson to them. The lesson is about how to pronounce the sound of the letter 'sheen' in the correct way. The teacher goes on saying: Look carefully at my mouth while I am trying to silence you by saying '*hish hish*.' The other children then play the part of teacher in turns. The child who performs this part the best is granted a prize.

- 2- Ask the children to stand in a row and put their hands on each other's waist as if they were a train. Then the train conductor, as played by one of the children, calls the passengers (the other children) to get on the train. As they hold one another's waist, the train starts to move out of the station. The children then begin to imitate the sound of a steam engine '*choo choo*,' going in a circle around the room. Next, ask a child to whistle to stop the train. All the children must pause when they hear the whistle and the one, who does not respond must get off the train, while the others continue playing till one of them wins at the end and receives a prize.

Each child can represent a separate train. Then a race is held between them, in which the children run and repeat "*choo choo.*" The winner is also given a prize.



### **The sound of 'seen' (s/c)**

Ask the children to fill their mouths with air as if they were tires, then let them form a circle around the room. Turn the children around as if you are piercing the tires one by one, at which time each child produces a hissing sound as the air comes out. The child who manages to blow the air more slowly than the others will pierce the tires next time.

### **The sound of "zay" (z)**

Ask one of the children to pretend he is a flower and the others are bees gathering sweet honey. Each child (bee) holds a thin strip of paper between his teeth and tries to touch 'the flower' with the paper strip. The children say 'z z z z z z z z' together, while the flower tries to run away from the bees. The one who can touch the flower without using his hands will return to the hive (a certain place in the room) and leave the strip there. A stop watch can be used to count how much time the whole process takes. The children then play the role of flower in turns. He who stays for the longest time before the others can touch him (her) will be the winner and get a prize. This prize could be a paper flower.

### **The sound of "lam" (l)**

Ask the children to do the following exercise using their arms and tongues. They raise their arms upwards and lift their

tongues to the upper part of the mouth so as to produce the sound of "lam" (l). Then they put their hands down and lower their tongues to produce the vowel included in the letter 'lam.' Thus the children pronounce the sound of 'la' in two steps by raising and lowering their hands. This exercise should be repeated several times for the sake of strengthening muscles and mastering the pronunciation of the letter. The same exercise can be repeated with other syllables like (*loo-lai-li*).

### **The sound of 'tha'a' (th)**

Let the children imagine that they have just drunk very hot soup and should cool their tongues by poking them through their front teeth, and blow them to get cold. Next, do the drill yourself and tell them that this is the sound of the letter 'tha'a' (th).

These games are performed with groups of children. Any mother can practice them with his (her) child with only a few minor changes. Such drills can lead children, if Allah wills, to pronounce the previous letters correctly and make them full of life. Meanwhile, parents can invent other games that may benefit their children and bring happiness to them while they learn.

## **B) Games to increase vocabulary**

There is no doubt that speech is the material that forms language and is the means of its survival. So, these kinds of games make good use of conversation and dialogue as the main type of communication.

As we practice this set of games, we should be aware of the important role of conversation and dialogue in enhancing a child's vocabulary. Through dialogue, the amount of words

received by memory increases and is more frequently used by the mind. A lot of word groups are made available to the child and are strengthened through use in conversation and dialogue. This process not only enables the individual to pronounce such words correctly and recognize the various rhythms produced by their letters and sounds, but it also instills these words into the child's memory. Hence, one can quickly and easily access these words when necessary and this will add to the child's fluency. The following are some of these games:

### **Letters**

Children compete with one another to say the alphabet in order quickly, without making any mistakes. As the children become good at memorizing letters, an alphabet race may start from bottom to top. The vowel points for *fat'ha* (a), *damma* (o) and *kasra* (i) can also be used in this game between Omar and his father.

### **Word-formation**

Cut a sheet of colored cardboard into 28 pieces (representing the alphabet), each one should be 7 x 4 cm, then write a single letter on each piece. Then do as follows: -

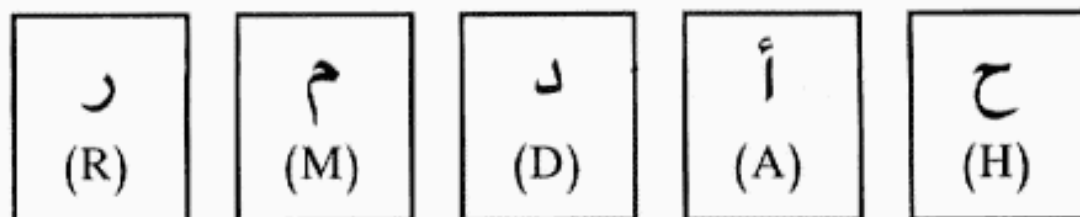
Turn over all the pieces and scramble them up.

Each competitor chooses 5' pieces and reads the letters written on them.

Each one then tries to form as many words as he (she) can, using all the five letters or some of them.

The one who forms the largest number of words is the winner.

### Example:-



The following words can be formed out of the above letters. The letters between brackets represent the vowel points fat'ha (a), *damma* (o) and *kasra* (i): -

/ 'Ahmad (a boy's name)	'ahm(a)r (red)	h(a) 'm(i)da (thanked)
'ah(a)d (one of)	'r(a)h(i)m(a) (forgave)	'h(a)ram (a holy place)
h(o)mr (red ones)	d(a)'maar (destruction)	'ahr(a)m (to enter into the state of ritual consecration)

### Sentence formation

It looks like a word-formation game, but words are written on pieces of cardboard. These words may be nouns, verbs or prepositions. Each child should choose a certain number of words so as to make as many correct sentences as possible.

#### Example:

Write the following words on the small pieces: -

fee (in)

Min (from)

'*ala* (on)  
'*ila* (to)  
Muhammad (a boy's name)  
'Hassan (a boy's name)  
Nooh (a boy's name)  
*Misr* (Egypt)  
Suriya (Syria)  
Filisteen (Palestine)  
'*yala'b* (play)  
'*yajlis* (sit)  
*yu'jahid* (struggle (v))  
*ha'zeen* (sad)  
'*raja'a* (come back)  
*sha'heed* (martyr)  
'*kura* (a ball)  
*al-majd* (glory)  
*al-janna* (paradise)  
*as-sa'deeq* (a friend)  
*al-adl* (justice)  
*an-nar* (fire)

Ask each child to choose '5' pieces and read the words written on them. You can read the words if the children are not able to read.

Ask each child to form as many sentences as possible. It is not necessary for the children to use all the words.

Through this game, the children learn how to make correct nominal and verbal clauses in a logical and practical way



without knowing the difference between a noun, a verb and a preposition.

You may shift to another group of words after the children have studied these words carefully.

### **Classification**

Give the children a set of various words and ask them to classify them as requested.

#### **Example 1: -**

Put the following words in the right column (people-animals-plants).

*'jamal* (camel)

'Umar (a boy's name)

'Hassan (a boy's name)

*qird* (a monkey)

*zarafa* (a giraffe)

Has'san (a boy's name)

*Hi'saan* (a horse)

*deek* (a rooster )

*iwaz'za* ( a goose)

*jawz* (nut (s))

*lawz* (almond(s))

Maysara (a boy's or girl's name)

'Mus'ab (a boy's name)

#### **Example 2: -**

Put the following words in their correct group, according to the place where they are used (field-kitchen-school).

*Boota'jaz* ( a butane cylinder)

*Lahm* (meat)

*'qalam* (a pen)

*fa's* (an ax)

*hi'mar* (a donkey)

*deek* (a rooster )

*mawz* (bananas)

*jamusa* (buffalo)

*himar* (a donkey)

*deek* (a rooster )

*mawz* (bananas)

*jamusa* ( a buffalo)

*mandhada* (a table)

*subbura* (a board)

*'koromb* (cabbage)

*waraqa* (a sheet of paper)

### **Succession of letters**

Start this game by saying a word; then ask the children to find another word beginning in the final letter of the first word. Let's the children compete in turn.

#### **Example: -**

*'amal* (work)

*Lu'bah* (a game or a toy)

*tamr* (date "a fruit" )

*rumh* ( a javelin)

Hossam (a boy's name)

'Majdy (a boy's name)

*yal'ab* ( play)

*baghl* (a mulc)

### **Words without dots**

Ask the children to think of a certain number of letters, which have no dots. (Some Arabic letters have dots like "» b / t / Àth". This game can be played between two persons or more; each of them says a word in turns and the one who stops first, is out. Here are examples of such words: -

('Adil: a boy's name)

('Umar: a boy's name)

('Alaa': a boy's name)

(I'mad: a boy s name)

(Da'lal: a girl's name)

(*lahm*: meat)

(*hi'mar*: a donkey)

(Ma'trooh: a city in Egypt)

(*rumh*: a javelin)

(Hossam: a boy's name)

Through this game, the children learn the significance of dots and punctuation in Arabic.

### **Letter fishing**

Make alphabet models of wood, plastic...etc. in different sizes; then put them into a glass basin or any other large container full of water. Also make a small hook for fishing letters out of the water.

### **How to play:**

Select a certain word. Each child should then fish the letters of the word out of the water as quickly as he can.

### **Guessing game**

One of the children goes out of the room, while the others choose a certain word (a thing) about which the child is going to ask many questions till he gets it. Here are some proposed questions: -

- Is it an animal, a plant or an inanimate body?
- What color is it? Can we see it? What does it look like?
- Where can we find it?
- Do we have a thing like it at home?

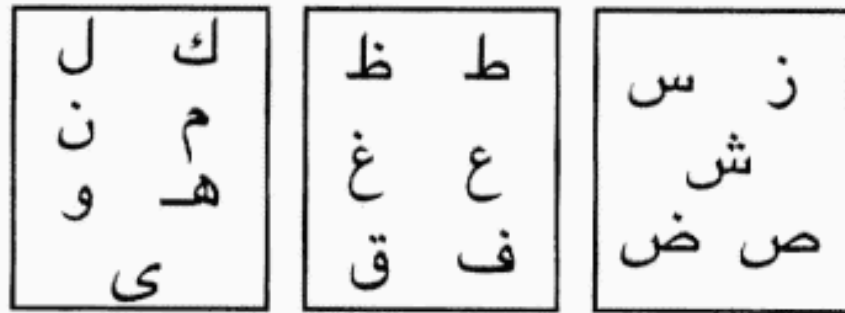
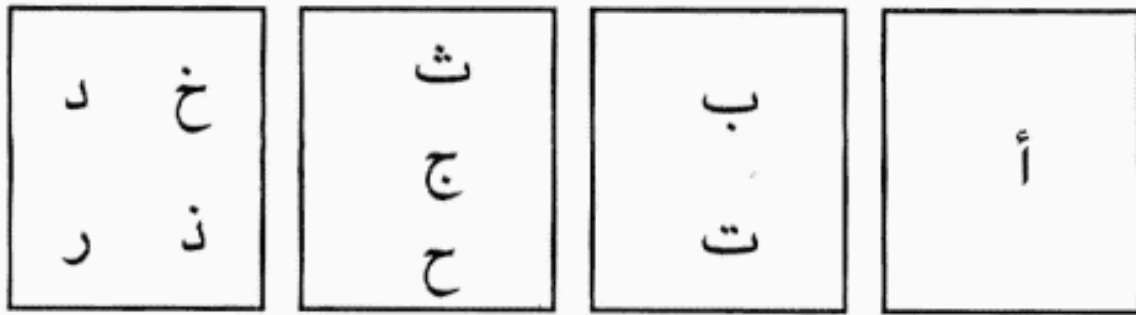
Through this game, the children become well trained on asking and answering questions. They also get used to thinking in a logic way when they link the pieces of information they get to reach the solution.

### **Linguistic cards**

This game is like the one we know but has a different make-up and orientation.

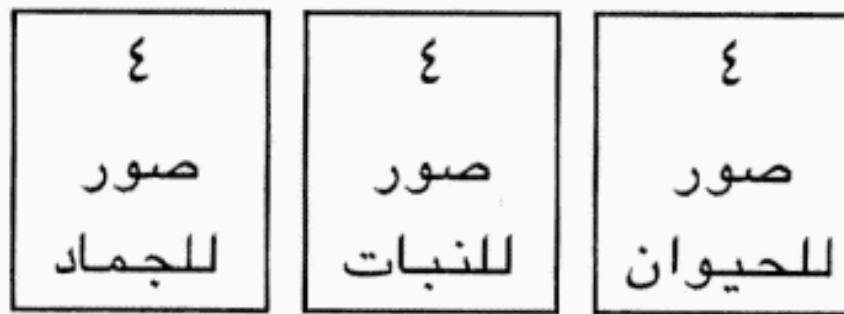
#### **How to make and play it?**

It consists of two parts. The first one includes the letters and is made of pieces of cardboard with a size of 7x 4 cms each. A single piece falls into four suits and contains one letter or more according to the following pattern: -



The second part includes pictures and figures distributed over 12 pieces of the above sized cardboard. Four suits of these cards consist of: animals, plants and inanimate bodies.

Four pictures each of animals, plants and inanimate bodies.



The overall number of language cards now is forty: 28 cards for letters and 12 cards for figures.

You can change the words included in the above groups after a while or you can replace these groups with other ones like birds, means of transport, and jobs and so on.

How to play: There are two players in this game. One player deals the cards out, while the other player takes his turn the next round.

The player, who deals the cards takes four for himself, passes four to his opponent and lays four down on the table.

Each player lays a card down in turn. If the card contains the same letters of another card that is laid down, or at least the same number of different letters, the player takes the other card and puts it aside.

The one who has a picture of an animal, takes all the cards that are laid down, at the time of his turn.

If there is just one card laid down, while it is the turn of a player who has only one identical card, the player then gets 10 or 20 points according to the type of the card.

At the end, the points are calculated as follows: 30 points for the one who has the largest number of cards; 10 points for the one who has two identical cards of letters, and 20 points for the one who has two identical cards of animals.

At the beginning of the game, you must set a certain number of points (300 or 400 for instance). The one who reaches this number first, is the winner.

Ideally this game is played with two people, but it can also be played with three.

As stated before, this game can be played by introducing a few changes into the usual one. This game can be adapted to suit all levels of learning.

## **Words of the same subject**

The children are asked to make a list of words related to a certain subject, for example, race, job, place... A child can play this game alone or with others (his or her parents) in turns. Here are some examples:

Animals: a camel, a donkey, a buffalo...

Plants: a flower, rice, taros, clover...

Foods: okra, rice, taros, meat...

Words of joy: pleasure, sadness...

Words about cars, means of transport, trade, farming, writing or any other activities.

Words about clothing: a fireman's uniform, sportswear, a diving suit...

Here we can refer to lexicons, such as *Fiqhul-Lugha* (How to Understand Language) by Ath-Tha'labi; *Jawahirul-Alfaz* (Precious Words) by Qudama ibn Ja'far; and *Ar-Rafid* (Tributaries of Language) by Ameen Nasserud-Deen.

The one who can continue to add to the list of words the end of the game without making mistakes, will be the winner.

## **Words beginning with the same letter**

The children are asked to think of words beginning with a certain letter. The one who says it incorrectly or can not think of one within one minute, is out of the game.

**Example 1** (Vowels stand for the letter " in Arabic: -

'alam -a flag

Imam-a boy's name

'*uloom* -sciences

'*alim* - a scholar

'*aalee* - high

'Umar - a boy's name

**Example 2 : -**

*kalb* - a dog

*Kabeer* - big

*kromb* - cabbage

*kubri* - bridge

Kareem - boy's name

*kamil* - complete

We can refer here to suitable dictionaries following the alphabetical order like *Al-Mu'jamu-Waseet* (Medium-Sized Dictionary); and *Al-Mu'jamul-Wajeez* (Concise Dictionary), both of which were issued by the Arabic Language Academy in Cairo.

### **Words ending in the same letter**

It is like the previous game; but the position of the letter here is at the end of the word.

**Example 1 : -**

*mawz* - bananas

*jawz* - almonds

*lawz* - nuts

*fawz* - winning



### **Example 2 : -**

*soor* - a wall/a fence

*thawr* - a bull

*a'awar* - having one-eye

*suwar* - pictures

*noor* - light

We can refer here to rhyme-method dictionaries (according to the last letter of words) such as *Al-Qamoosul-Muheet* (The Comprehensive Dictionary) for *Al-Fayruzabadi*; and *Mukhtarus-Sahhah* (The Selected and Accurate Dictionary) by Muhammad bin Bakr Abdul-Qader Ar-Razi.

### **Words having a joint letter**

It is similar to the two previous games; but it neither depends on the first letter nor the final letter of the word. A group of words should only share a certain letter.

**Example:** The letter "d" in the following words

*dir'* - a shield

*sadgh* - a temple in one's body

*dawr* - a floor

*muda'abah* - joking

*bard* - cold (noun)

It is to be noted that the above four games and others like them, help children join words together and thus easily recognize and remember them. A linguist says, "A child's mind tends to join words together according to their shape." In addition, comparison and joining broadens the child's linguistic horizon, enhances his (her) imagination and accustoms him to

matching things to reach conclusions of agreement and disagreement. This is after all, a thinking activity, which helps develop the child's mental growth and experience.

### **Antonyms**

The children are given words standing alone or put into sentences or contexts and are asked to tell the antonyms of such words. Sentences should be simple, well phrased and humorous and help the children to recall the opposite words.

#### **Examples of antidotes: -**

*al-harara & al-borooda* heat & coldness

*mutaqadim & mut'khir* (advanced & backward)

*jayyid & radee'* (good & bad)

*as-swad & al-bayad* (black & white (noun))

*fadheela & razeela* (virtue & vice)

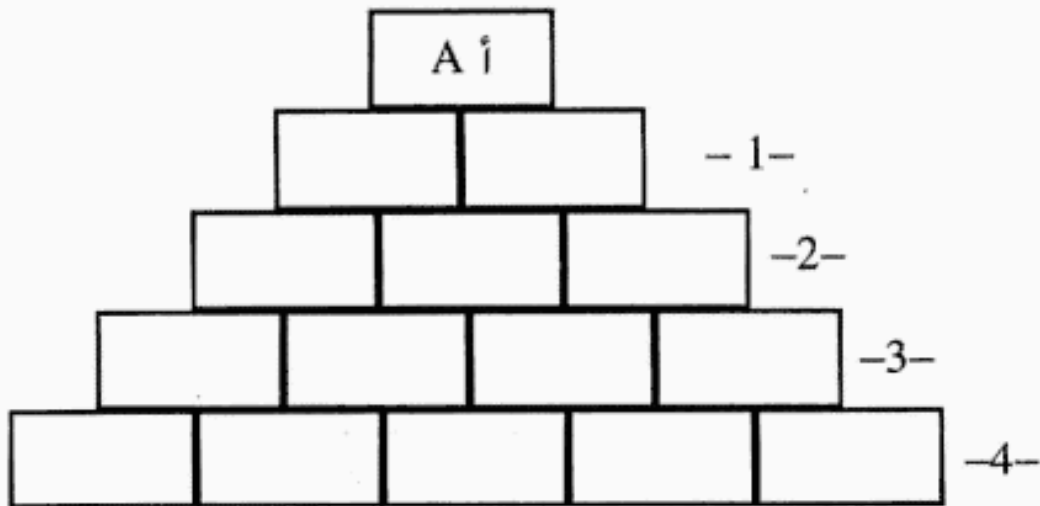
*khafeef & thaqeel* (light & heavy)

### **Coloured words**

A short story or a paragraph is carefully written for the children to read first; then to color each group of words according to its meaning. For example, words indicating anger are colored red, those portraying satisfaction are colored green, those standing for foods are colored brown, words relating to decoration are colored pink, and words associated with water are colored blue and so on. It is important here to fix new words together with their meanings into the children's minds through the use of colors. A child thus realizes the relation between words and how some words help implant others into his/her mind to be used when required.

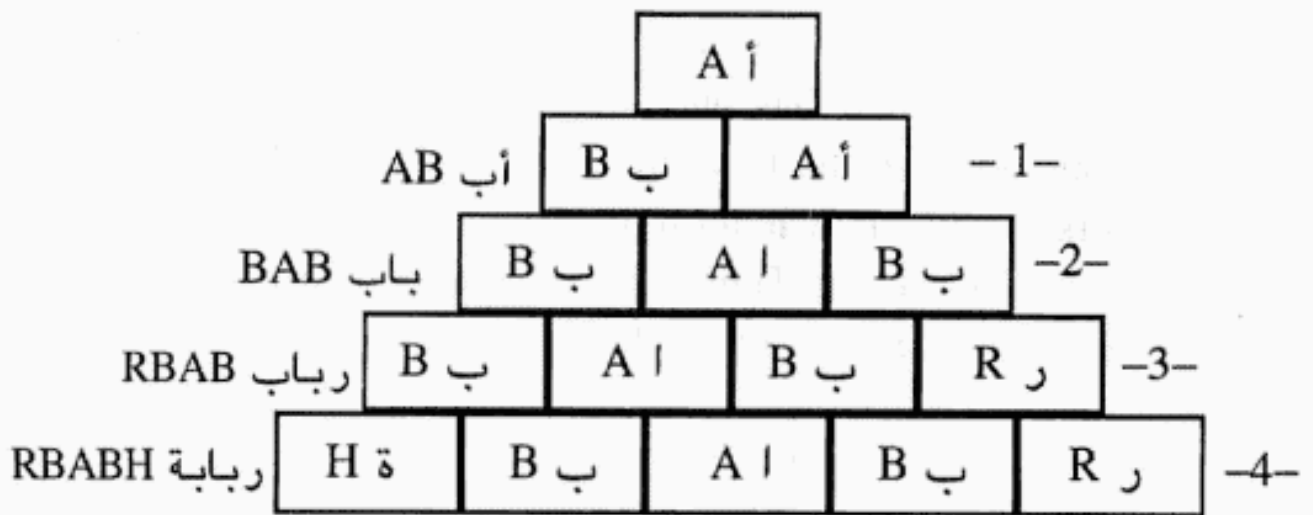
## A Pyramid of letters

Draw a pyramid of squares fallen in sequential fields or rows, so that each row has one square more than the previous one. Put one letter in the first square at the top of the pyramid. Ask players to add a new letter to the second row to form a word with the previous letter. Thus, a letter is added to each row to form new words. Let's see example 1: -

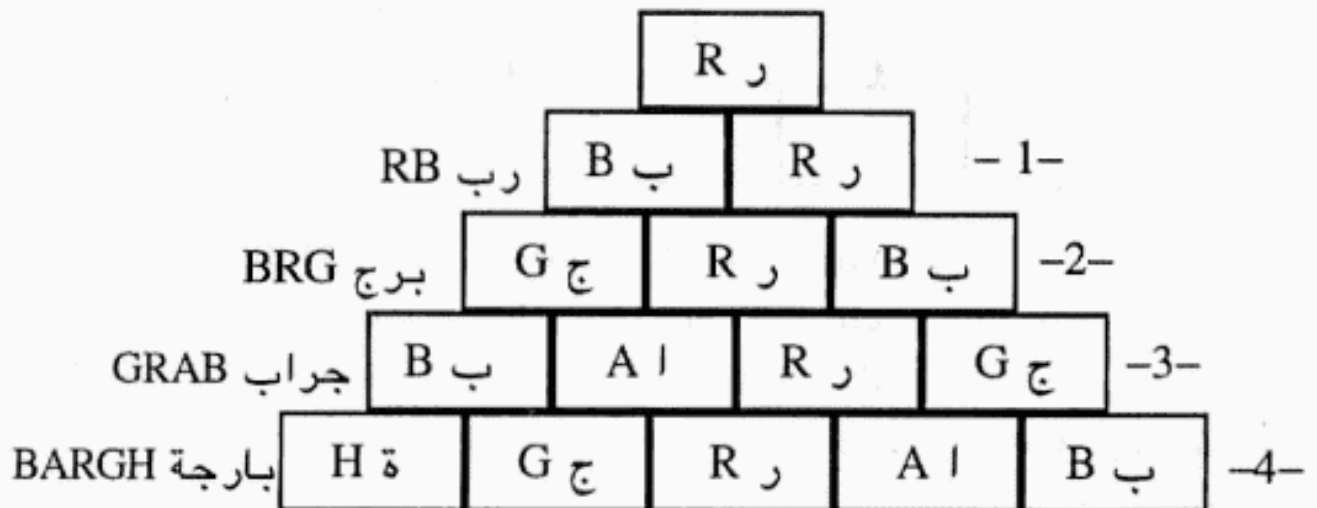


Add one letter to the row at the top of the pyramid and put them in row (1); then add one letter to each of the next three rows and arrange the letters into rows so as to obtain four meaningful words at the end (one word in a row). Here is the solution: -

Add the letter (b) to form (*ab* "father") in the first row. Add another (b) to form (*bab* "a door") in the second row. Add (— r) to form (—*rabab* "a girl's name") in the third row. Add (... ah) to form (—... *rababah* "a rebec") in the fourth row.



**Example2: -**



### Password

Draw a square, then divide it into small sequential ones. Put a letter in each small square according to a certain order of definite words. Players are asked to cross the letters off except for the ones forming the password in question. Let's see an example:

Strike the following words off this square whether they are in a vertical or horizontal position, read from up to down or vice versa:

*barid* (mail)

'Umar (a boy's name)

*rumman* (pomegranate)

*bir* (goodness)

*manzil* (a house)

*hodhod* (a hoopoe)

The password is an Arab capital

ع U	م M	ر R	ر R	ب B
ن N	ا A	م M	ر R	ب B
ن N	ن N	ز Z	ل L	ر R
د D	هـ H	د D	هـ H	ي I
ق Q	ش SH	م M	د D	د D

This game helps the children to be quick thinking. Teachers can choose passwords of new useful words and explain important pieces of information relating to these words.

### **Pieces of Advice**

In order to make the linguistic games that we play with children more vivid, attractive and useful, we should consider the following points: -

We can use rhythmic clapping and singing when playing some games like those of letters and words beginning and ending in the same letter.

We can add new words for children through games like those of letter fishing and formation. It is better to start with things in a child's environment such as animals, birds, clothing and tools...etc. We can stress these new words through pictures, visits (if they stand for places) or stories.

These games should be shared by the child's parents, brothers and sisters or friends in an atmosphere of love, encouragement and excitement, by means of giving prizes to the winners and those who try hard.

It is important to make folios for these games together with new words and methods, with the aim of measuring performance and introducing development and innovation into the games.

We must pay attention to the child's mental, linguistic and psychological level when selecting and playing games. We should also apply graduated steps when developing these games.

## **Second: Intellectual Games**

### **(Puzzles and Riddles)**

#### **Arithmetic puzzles**

1. What is the number which if you multiply by itself, then add four to it, you will get '20'?
2. What are the two numbers which if you multiply together, you will get '12' and if you add them together, you will get '13'?
3. How can we use three nines to get '8'?
4. Nabeel had a sum of money. He passed seven points and gave half of the amount to some poor people at each point. When he finished, he had only one pound left. How many pounds did he have in the beginning?
5. Some ducks were walking down the street. One duck walks in front of two others; a duck walks behind two others; and a duck walks between two others. What is the fewest number of ducks that can walk this way?
6. When you go to school, you pass 20 houses on the right side of the road. When you come back, you pass 20 houses on the left side of the road. How many houses are there between the school and the house?

7. A man weighs 70 kg.. He has two sons named Muhammad and 'Ali. Each weighs 35 kg.. The three people want to cross the river in a boat which cannot take a load exceeding 70 kg. How can they solve this problem?
8. A man bought a pen with one pound from a stationery shop. He gave the shop assistant a ten-pound note but the assistant did not have any change. The assistant then went to the next door grocery and replaced the ten-pound note with one-pound notes. He gave the man nine pounds. After a while, the grocer came to the assistant and told him that the ten-pound note was counterfeit. The shop assistant took the forged note and gave the grocer a real one. The shop assistant wondered how much he had lost in this sale. Is it: 9 pounds, 10 pounds, 20 pounds or 11 pounds.
9. Hassan goes out daily to sell 30 oranges. He sells two oranges for one pound. Thus he earns 15 pounds. Hassan's friend 'Ali, also goes out to sell 30 oranges. He sells three oranges for one pound. Thus he earns 10 pounds. Both men will then have 25 pounds when they sell all their oranges. One day, 'Ali fell ill and Hassan got his share of oranges to sell. Thus he had 60 oranges. He decided to sell 5 oranges for two pounds so as to do no harm to neither himself nor his friend. When he finished selling all the oranges at the end of the day, he found that he had only 24 pounds. What happened to the missing pound?
10. Two baskets have a certain number of eggs each. If we take an egg from a basket and put it into the other, the second basket will contain twice the amount of eggs of the first one. If we do the opposite, i.e. take an egg from the second basket



and put it into the first one, the two baskets will have the same number of eggs. How many eggs did each basket originally have?

11. I agreed with a friend to meet him somewhere at two o'clock. Meantime, my watch was running 5 minutes slow but I thought it was running 5 minutes fast. I reached the place on time. When did I arrive?
12. My pay is equal to yours. Your pay is twice my pay minus 500 pounds. How much do each of us get paid?
13. We put a glass of water into an empty container on a certain day. The next day, we put 2 glasses of water into the container. We put 4 glasses on the third day, and 8 glasses on the fifth day on which the container was filled with water. How many glasses of water did we put into the container?
14. I said to a friend: My watch was running 15 minutes slow, while I thought it was running 5 minutes fast. Then I looked at my watch and calculated the difference of time and found that it should have been five past eight. What was the correct time?
15. A father distributed a flock of sheep between his three children. He gave a third of the flock to one of them; a half to another one and a ninth to the third one, but there was still one sheep. How many sheep were there altogether?

### **Linguistic puzzles**

1. A word consisting of four letters and meaning '*amn & istiqrar*' (security and stability). What is it? Take these pieces of information into account: -

The 4<sup>th</sup> letter + the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter mean *inhana* (bowed)

The 1<sup>st</sup> letter + the 4<sup>th</sup> letter + the 3<sup>rd</sup> letter mean 'ala' (highness)

The 3<sup>rd</sup> letter + the 4<sup>th</sup> letter + the 1<sup>st</sup> letter mean 'al-yawm as-sabiq' (the previous day)

The following square will help you find the word:

4th letter	3rd letter	2nd letter	1st letter

2. A word consisting of eight letters. If the first letter is omitted, it becomes *thamaniyah*" (eight). What is it?
3. What is it? There are three letters without dots. If you omit the first letter, it becomes another name for a cat. If you omit the last letter, it means 'keep silent.'
4. What is it? When it is read vice versa, it becomes a preposition.
5. What is it? It has a little body but it does a very important job. Its head contains (a hoof) and its tail contains an eye.
6. What is it? It has neither a mouth nor a stomach but it eats lots of things. When you feed it, it lives and grows; when you water it, it passes away?
7. What is it? It is a fair judge with hands but no tongue. People are always satisfied with its judgment though it does not utter a word.

8. Ahmad, Hamdi, Ham'mad, Madih and Hamid are five names derived from the letters forming the word 'Ahmadi.' They are rewritten in symbols, in a manner that a certain symbol stands for each letter of these names, however the names are arranged in a different order. Can you name the symbol of each letter of the five letters that form the word 'Ahmadi' and thus know the new order of the five words? The underlined letters stand for the vowel points in Arabic.

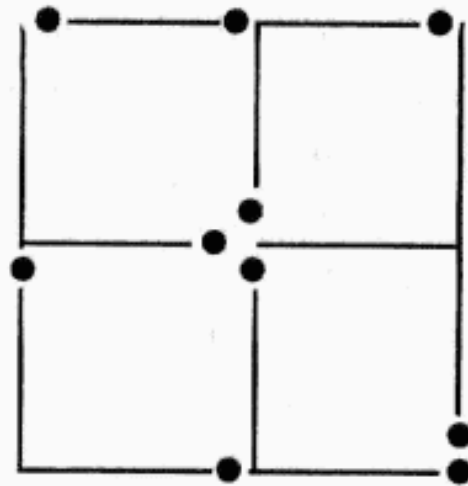
Name				Number
*	□	○	△	(1)
△	÷	*	□	(2)
÷	*	□	△	(3)
*	□	△	○	(4)
*	○	□	△	(5)

9. Do we say: *safar al-bayd abyadon*? or *safar al-bayd abyadan*?

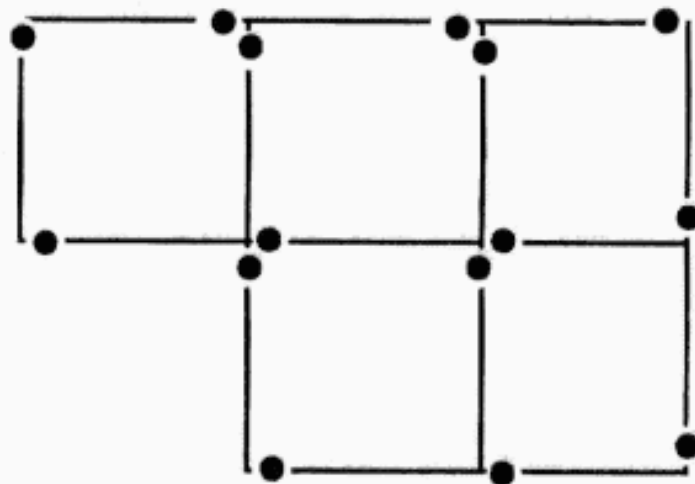
The word '*abyadon*' in the first sentence is in the indicative, whereas the word '*abyadan*' in the second sentence is in the accusative. However, both sentences mean the same thing in English: Is an egg yolk white?

### Geometric puzzles

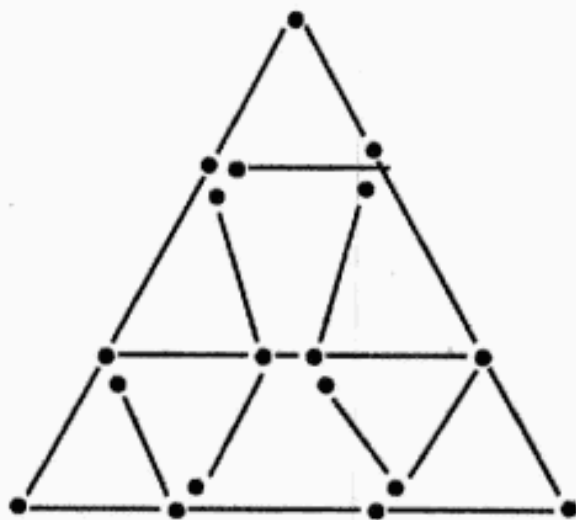
1. Can you remove two matchsticks from this figure to get only two squares?



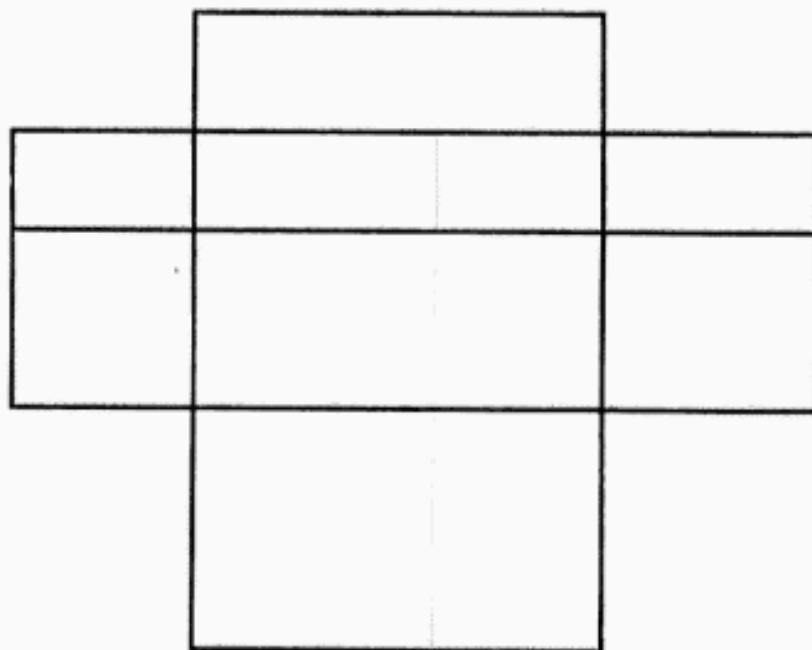
2. We have 15 matchsticks that form 5 squares (as in the figure below). Can you form three squares through removing three sticks only?



3. We used 18 sticks to form the figure below. Try to: -  
 remove 3 matchsticks to get 6 triangles.  
 remove 5 sticks to get 5 triangles.

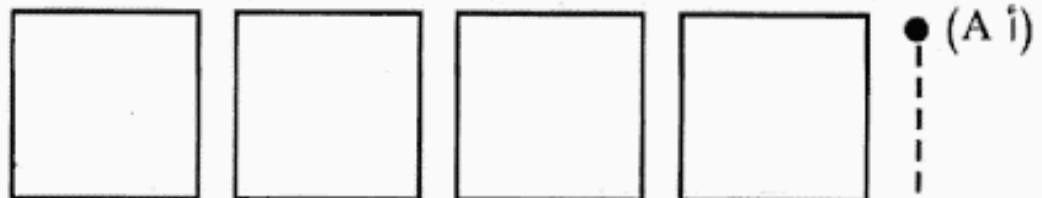
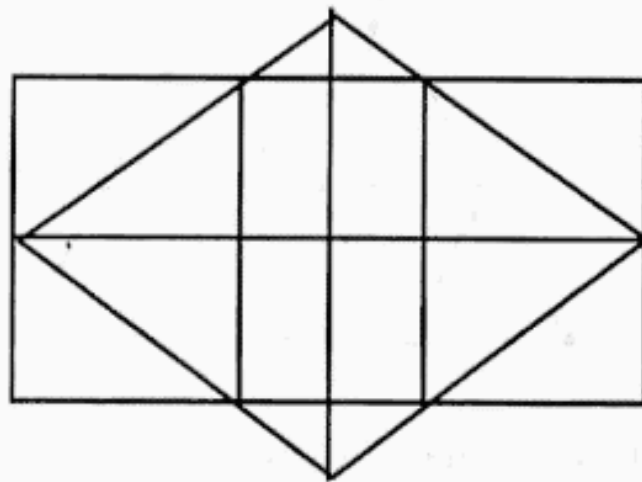


4. The number of rectangles shown clearly in this figure is 8, but there are still other intersecting rectangles. How many rectangles are there in the figure in all?



5. In the figure below, state the number of:

- (1) triangles      (2) squares      (3) rectangles



(B ب) ●

6. The above figure shows a plot of land divided into eight equal square pieces, separated by narrow streets. The discontinuous line is the road along which a worker walks from his house 'a' to his place of work 'b.' How many roads equal to the main road can the worker walk along?

## **Popular (various) puzzles**

1. What is the thing that begins in Lebanon and ends in Istanbul?
2. Where can you find countries without population, rivers without water and land without earth?
3. An animal has a dog's tail, ears and legs but it isn't a dog. What is it?
4. It has two ears but it doesn't hear. What is it?
5. Who is the cousin of your father's niece?
6. It is water but it is neither from the sky nor the earth. What is it?
7. A blind man and a dumb man went to a shop. As the dumb man wanted to buy a comb, he made a signal with his hand. The shop assistant understood him and gave him a comb. The blind man wanted to buy a toothbrush. What did he do to get it?
8. It walks and stops, while it has neither legs nor wheels. What is it?
9. It sleeps while wearing shoes. What is it?
10. We buy it as something black, but we make use of it when it is red. What is it?
11. It has five fingers but without bones or flesh. What is it?
12. It writes a lot but never reads a letter. What is it?
13. It comes out of the sea, but it dies if returned to it. What is it?
14. It penetrates glass but doesn't break it. What is it?

15. It has skin (a hard cover) but it isn't an animal. It has leaves but it isn't a plant. What is it?
16. He walks on the ground and his head is on the stars. Who is it?
17. It breathes but doesn't have a soul. What is it?
18. A driver was travelling along the right side of the road. Suddenly, he turned to the left, jumping over the sidewalk and knocked a man down, then lightning struck a post. A policeman who was walking near him didn't stop the driver to record a traffic offence. Why?
19. It always moves around you but you don't see it. What is it?
20. It has four legs but cannot walk. What is it?
21. It keeps accompanying you in the dark but disappears in the light. What is it?
22. It has an eye but doesn't see. What is it?
23. It has a tail but it isn't an animal. What is it?
24. It has teeth but doesn't bite. What is it?
25. Whenever it grows longer, it becomes short. What is it?
26. It looks like half a watermelon. What is it?
27. It holds hundreds and thousands but doesn't have room for a small sparrow. What is it?
28. Whenever you take from it, it grows. Whenever you add to it, it becomes less. What is it?
29. When it is filled, it does not put on weight. When it is emptied, it does not lose weight. What is it?
30. What is the animal that does not make any sound?



31. He will be very happy if he becomes one-eyed. Who is it?
32. It can carry a (*kantar*)? but it cannot carry a nail? What is it?
33. It is green when you buy it but it becomes red when you put it in your hand. What is it?
34. It eats but does not become satisfied unless it drinks water. What is it?
35. It is naked but dresses others. What is it?
36. How can you throw a ball strongly, so that it rushes away, then stops, then falls back without hitting a wall or any other body?
37. It angers water, disturbs trees and makes flower bow to it. What is it?
38. Twin sisters live very close to each other; one on the right and the other on the left but they cannot see one another. What are they?
39. It is so weak that the breeze may move it, but yet so strong that a sharp knife cannot cut it. What is it?
40. It is not very big but it can fill a room. We need it at night but do not need it during the day. What is it?
41. Two small boats without sails hold ten persons. They neither run on a sea or a river but they travel by road. They can move by day and by night if the passengers get on board. What are they?
42. It is a house made of neither stone nor wood. The walls of the house are as white as milk without windows or doors. If you pull the wall, they turn into threads. What is it?

43. You can find it under the sun, the moon and in the light of lamps. It follows you wherever you go. What is it?
44. Two fathers and two sons went hunting, but they only caught three rabbits. Each one had one rabbit. How come?
45. A man with a sheep, a wolf and a sack of wheat, wants to cross a river, but his boat can only hold two things at a time. He thinks that the wolf will devour the sheep if he leaves them together, and that the sheep will eat the wheat if he is left alone. How can you help the man cross the river with all his belongings?

### **More puzzles to make your child think of suitable conclusions**

1. What are the different uses of the following things:  
wood - paper - money - bread - leaves of trees - a bicycle
2. What would happen if: You had one eye or one Hand, you understand the language of birds, you did not have any teeth, man could fly like birds, man could walk on the water, you slept while walking, we could not write, and there were no schools?
3. Think of the largest number of impossible things, for example, Satan goes to Paradise, all people resemble each other.
4. What would you do in the following situations?
  - You went to sit for a history exam but you found it was in English.
  - You felt an earthquake while you were at home alone.

- You saw a mouse in your room.
- After you had drunk a glass of juice at a shop, you found that you did not have any money.

## Answer key

### Arithmetic puzzles

1- The number is 4,  $4 \times 4 = 16 + 4 = 20$

2- The two numbers are '12' and '1,'  $12 \times 1 = 12$ ,  $12 + 1 = 13$

3- 9-  $9 / 9 = 8$

4- At the seventh point he had  $1 \times 2 = 2$

At the sixth point he had  $2 \times 2 = 4$

At the fifth point he had  $4 \times 2 = 8$

At the fourth point he had  $8 \times 2 = 16$

At the third point he had  $16 \times 2 = 32$

At the second point he had  $32 \times 2 = 64$

At the first point he had  $64 \times 2 = 128$  pounds

5- Three ducks

6- Twenty houses: They are on the right side when he goes. They themselves are on the left side when he returns.

7- **First**, Muhammad and 'Ali (35+35 kg) get onto the boat. When they arrive at the other bank, Muhammad returns alone.

**Second**: The father (70 kg) gets on the boat alone. When arriving at the other bank, 'Ali returns to his brother.

**Third:** Muhammad and 'Ali (35+35 kg) get onto the boat and go to the other bank where their father is waiting.

- 8- The shop assistant lost ten pounds that represented the value of the counterfeit note that he took.
- 9- 'Ali's oranges can be divided into 10 sets, each containing 3 oranges. If we add two of Hassan's oranges to each set, the ten sets can be sold with 20 pounds (Every 5 oranges with two pounds). There are still 10 oranges belonging to Hassan. If he sold every two oranges for one pound, he would get 5 pounds, but he sold five for 2 pounds, so he only received 4 pounds which is one pound less than the previous price. This is the missing pound.
- 10- The original number of eggs in the two baskets is (5,7) respectively.
- 11- As I thought that my watch was running five minutes fast, I intended to reach the meeting place at five past two, but the watch was running five minutes slow. This means that when the real time was ten past two, the hands pointed to five past two. Thus, the time delay was 10 minutes.
- 12- My wage is 500 pounds. The same as yours.
- 13- The basin was filled with water on the fifth day after we put:  
 $1 + 2 + 4 + 8 + 16 = 31$  glasses of water.
- 14- It was twenty five past eight because the difference between the real time and the incorrect time was 20 minutes.
- 15- The children took:

$$(1/3) + (1/2) + (1/9) = (6/9/2) / 18 = 17 / 18$$

$$\text{The rest} = (18 / 18) - (17 / 18) = 1 / 18$$

The rest represents one sheep.....  $1 = 1 / 18$

Then the number of sheep =  $(1 \times 18) / 1 = 18$

### Language puzzles

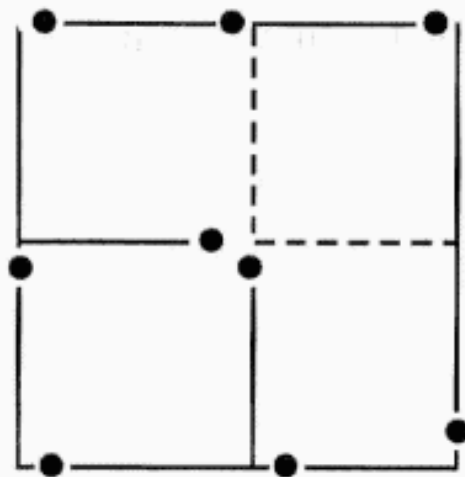
- 1- The word is *salam* (peace )
- 2- The word is *Uthmaniya* (an ex Islamic state).
- 3- The word is *sihr* ( a son or brother-in-law).
- 4- The word is *farah* (joy).
- 5- A needle
- 6- Fire
- 7- Balance

(I) $\text{س} = \div$	(D) $\text{د} = *$	(M) $\text{م} = \square$	(A) $\text{ا} = \odot$	(H) $\text{ح} = \Delta$
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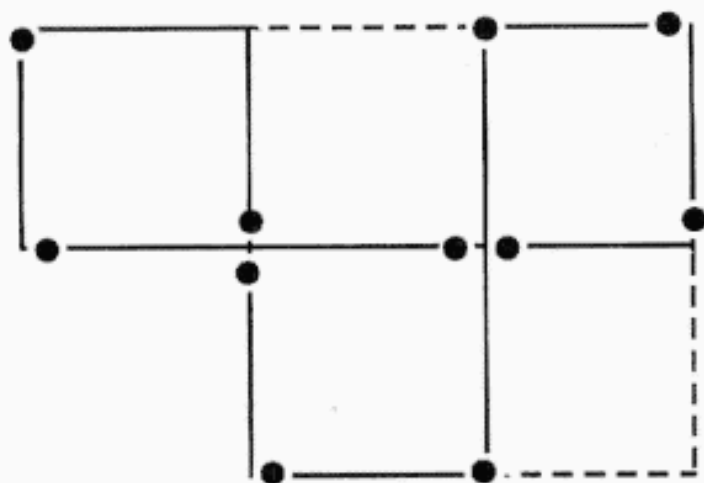
- 9- Egg yolk is yellow, not white.

### Geometric puzzles

- 1-

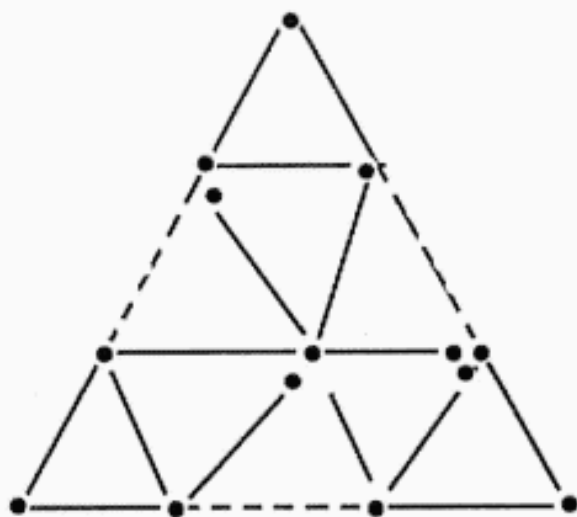


2-

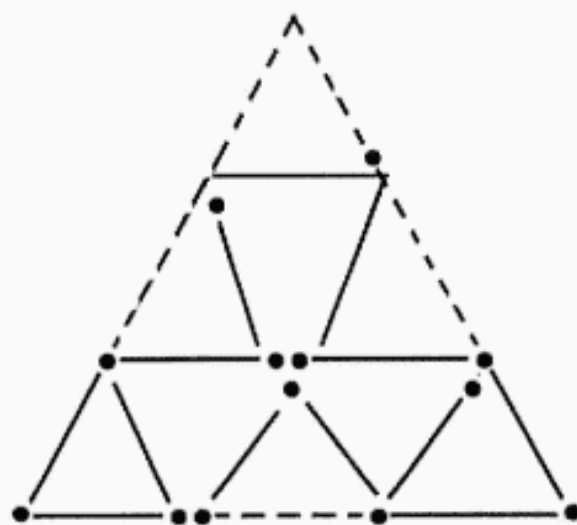


3-

A)



B)



4- The total number of rectangles =  $25 : 8 + 9 + 4 + 3 + 1 = 25$ .

5- The number of triangles =  $12 + 4 + 4 + 4 = 24$ .

The number of squares =  $8 + 4 = 12$ .

The number of rectangles =  $10 + 4 + 2 + 2 + 1 = 19$ .

6- The number of roads is 15.

### **Popular puzzles (miscellaneous)**

1- The letter J (L)

2- On a map

3- A female dog

4- A jar

5- This is your sister.

6- Tears

7- He told the shop assistant that he wanted a toothbrush. He did not have to make a signal as the dumb man had done.

8- A clock or a watch

9- A horse

10- Coal

11- A glove

12- A pen or a pencil

13- Salt

14- Light

15- A book

16- An officer, who puts stars on his shoulders



- 17- An air pump
- 18- The driver was walking, not driving his car.
- 19- Air
- 20- A chair
- 21- Your shadow
- 22- A needle
- 23- A dress
- 24- A comb
- 25- One's age
- 26- The other half
- 27- A beehive
- 28- A hole
- 29- A clock or a watch
- 30- A giraffe
- 31- A blind man
- 32- A sea or a river
- 33- Henna (campfire)
- 34- Fire
- 35- A needle
- 36- Throw the ball upwards
- 37- Wind
- 38- The two eyes
- 39- Water

40- A lamp

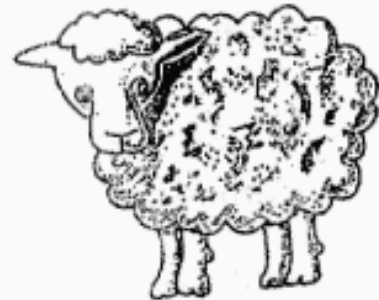
41- Shoes

42- A silkworm

43- Your shadow

44- The two fathers and the two sons are three persons: a son, his father and his grandfather.

45- He leaves the wolf with the sack of wheat and takes the sheep to the other bank, then returns alone to take the wolf and cross the river with it. Next, he comes back with the sheep, then leaves it and takes the sack of wheat. After that, he returns and leaves the sack with the wolf. Next, he returns alone and takes the sheep from the other bank.



## **Third: Games for Entertainment**

### **Come on, duckling**

Dear mother... Seat your child on your knees and sway him gently while singing a song. The words of the song are as follows:

Come on, duckling... Take a step.

Come on, pretty boy (girl)... have a jump.

When you 'step,' sway him (her) more by raising your knees higher. Repeat this line several times. When you say 'jump' raise your knees higher and higher. Thus you encourage him to expect the action before it begins.

### **Hunting and fishing**

A child is trained on all the necessary techniques for hunting such as hiding, quest and pursuit...etc. These games are divided into two parts: practical training - like chasing insects and locusts, hunting birds and fishing; and imaginary training like the game of 'hide and seek.'

### **A word, a line and a page number**

A child gives his friends a book and asks them to open it to any page, then choose any line from the first nine lines, then

choose any word from the first nine words in this particular line and keep this information in their minds; they are not to tell anyone. Next, the child asks his friends to

- multiply the chosen page number by 10
- add 25
- add the chosen line number
- multiply the total by 10
- add the chosen word number

Then the child asks his friends to give him the final result and subtracts 250 from it to get a number that is explained as follows: the units digit stands for the word; the tens digit stands for the line and the remaining digits stand for the page. For example, if the final result after subtracting 250 is 5464, the word number will be 4; the line number 6 and the page digits 54.

### **Age and birth year**

Dear clever child...Ask one of your friends to do the following pieces of arithmetic in order, without telling you. When you know the result, you will know his age and year of birth, as the total consists of six digits of which the units and tens digits stand for the age and the remaining four digits stand for the year of birth.

- multiply your birth year by 2
- add 5
- multiply the total by 50
- add your age

- Ask your friend to give you the final result, then subtract 250 from it to get a number that is explained as follows: the first two digits stand for the age and the other four stand for the year of birth. For example, if the final result is 198713, this means that your friend is 13 years old and he was born in 1987.

### **Hand touching**

Players, ranging from 10 to 20, raise their hands upwards and encircle a child who tries to touch their hands gently. Meantime, the players try to avoid being touched by quickly lowering their hands next to their sides. When the encircled child touches everyone, the latter plays his turn and so on.

### **Be careful**

A circle is drawn on the ground, into which some children enter. While a child standing outside the circle whistles, beats on a drum or plays a cassette player, the children run slowly inside the circle. When the sound stops, the children have to sit on the ground. The last one to sit goes out of the game and so on till there is only one person remaining. This is the winner.

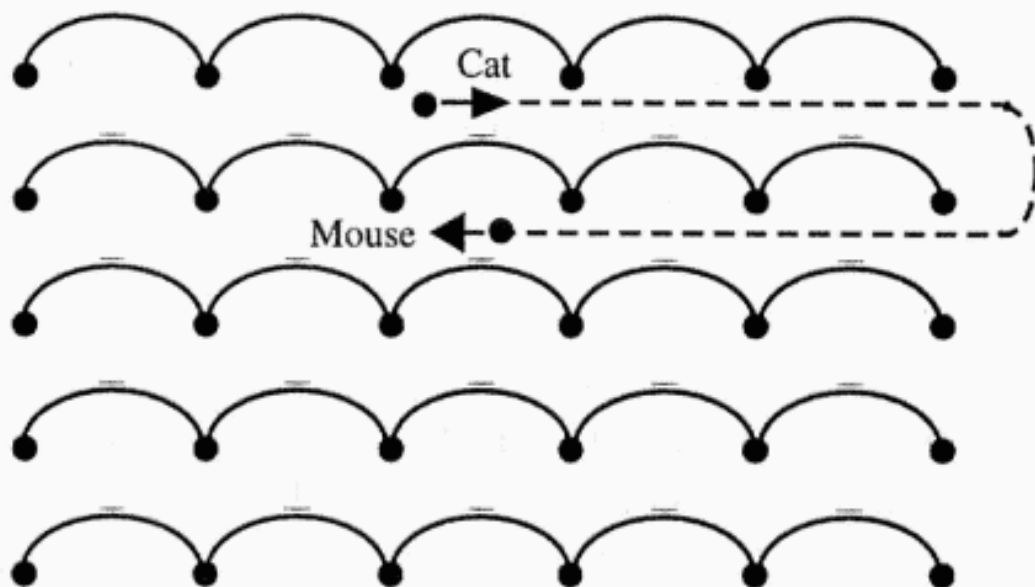
### **Get ready**

Put a number of sticks on the ground at a distance and ask some children (from 5 to 10) to stand in a row. The number of children should be one person fewer than the number of sticks. When the children hear a sound of a whistle or a phrase like 'Allah is Great,' each child should run quickly to get a stick. The one who does not succeed to take a stick is out of the game.

Every time a child is 'out,' one stick is removed. The game continues in this way till a child grabs the last stick and wins. There should be spaces between the sticks so that the children may not obstruct one another.

### **Cat and mouse**

This game requires a large number of children (from 25 to 100) standing in rows (from 5 to 10). Each row has (5-10) children as shown in this figure.

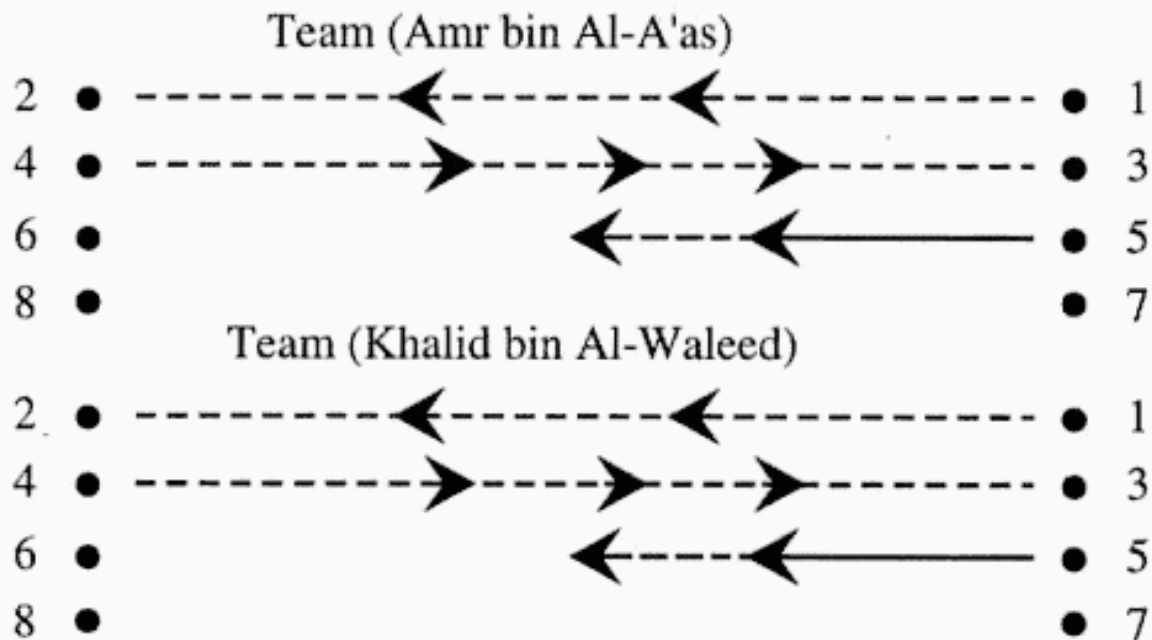


Children from each row hold one another's hands, then raise their hands to the level of their shoulders. Each row represents a strong wall. Two children are chosen to play the cat and the mouse and stand at two different places between the rows. The cat should catch the mouse while the latter tries to escape. Both of them should not penetrate the rows by passing beneath the hands. After a while, the direction of the rows is changed, so that it will be more difficult for the cat and the mouse to run. When the cat catches the mouse, two other children play the roles and so on.

Appropriate spaces between the rows should be marked, in order that the children may not obstruct each other. The cat and the mouse should be told not to hold any of the children while running between the rows 'walls.'

### The raised flag

Some children ranging from 12 to 24 share in this game. They stand in two equal rows separated from each other by a distance of 30-50 paces and face one another. Then each row is divided into two equal halves. The two groups facing each other are called after the two Companions of the Prophet (Khalid bin Al-Waleed and Amr bin Al-A'as for example, as shown below:



Then the members of each team are given certain numbers as indicated above.. Player No. 1 from each team is given a small flag. When he (she) hears the starting signal, he should run towards player No. 2, give him the flag and return to his (her) place. Player No. 2, in turn, runs towards player No. 3 and hands him the flag and so on. The team who manages to pass the flag to the last member in the fastest time, will be the winner.

N.B. Before the game starts, we can ask each team to give a piece of information about the Companion to whom they belong. We can also urge the children to keep raising the flag till the end, thus teaching them the importance of the flag in a battle and how the Companions also kept the flag raised high.

### **The ball and the racket**

A number of children ranging from 12 to 25 take part in this game. The children stand in a circle drawn on the ground and direct their faces inwards. A child stands in the centre of the circle having his legs in a position of readiness and holds a racket in his hand. The game starts when one of the circle members holds a small rubber ball 'a light tennis ball' and throws it at the feet or the legs of the child in the centre. Meanwhile, the child in the centre defends himself by hitting the ball away with the racket. The other children in turn throw the ball towards the target. The child in the centre of the circle, goes out of the game if:

- 1- the ball hits his feet.
- 2- he strikes the ball away and a player inside the circle catches it before it hits the ground.

The child, who manages to get the racket holder out of the game, takes his place. A small circle should be drawn here for the racket holder to stand and move inside. If he goes out of this circle, he goes out of the game.

### **The Ball and the feet**

This game is shared by a number of players equal to that of the previous game. The players stand in a circle, directing their

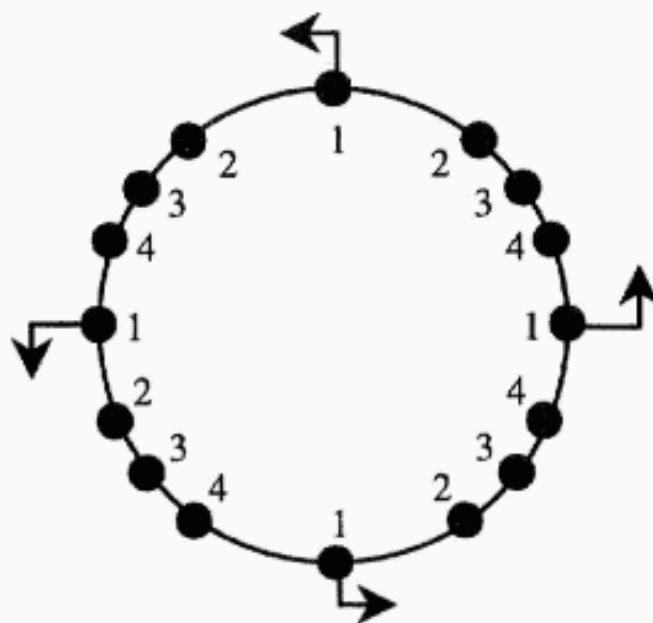


faces inwards. A child stands in the centre of the circle and shoots the ball quickly across the ground, to pass it beneath the other children's feet. Meanwhile, the children try to prevent the ball from passing by using their feet, but they should not touch the ball with their hands. If the child in the centre of the circle manages to pass the ball, he has to stand at the place of the child, who failed to turn the ball away.

N.B. The children should circle at appropriate spaces so that they will not hurt one another. The child in the centre should not raise the ball over the ground in order not to harm his comrades. If he does so, he is out of the game.

### **The Circle contest**

A number of 16-32 players join in this game, provided that the number of participants can be divided by 4. The players stand in a circle and each one takes a number from '1' to '4' as shown below:

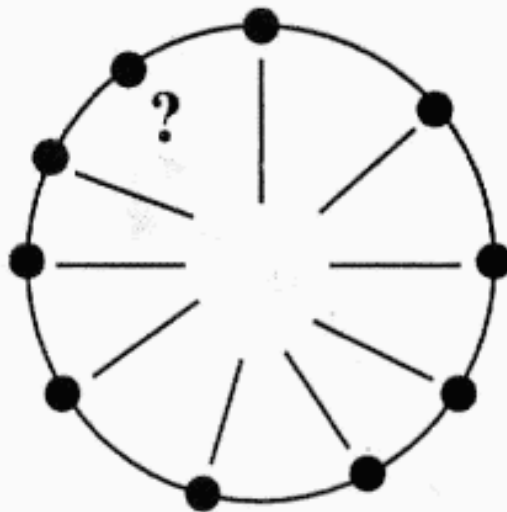


The game starts when a child stands outside the circle and calls: "No. 1, get ready." At this moment, the children bearing No. 1 take a step outside the circle and get prepared to race.

When the child outside the circle gives a starting signal, the other children should run after one another, trying to touch or precede each other. The child who is touched or preceded by another is out of the game. He (she) who remains till the end wins the race. Afterwards, the children bearing Nos. "2,3 and 4" join the race in the same manner. Those who win in each No., totaling 4, race together and there is only one winner.

### **The Stick**

From seven to fifteen children stand in a circle, and are separated by two or three paces. A small stick or a ruler is put before each child so that one end faces the centre of the circle and the other end faces his (her) feet. One child is left without a stick as shown in the figure



As the players hear a certain signal (whistling or shouting), they run after one another in the circle behind the sticks. When they hear another signal, each child runs to a stick and grabs it. The one, who does not grab a stick, is out of the game and so on till there are only two players competing for the remaining stick and the last one is the winner.

## **Postman**

From fifteen to thirty players share in this game. Each one chooses the name of a country to be called by. A child writes down the real names of the other children and their selected countries. Then all the children sit in a circle directing their faces towards the centre, being separated from one another by two or three paces. After that, a child stands in the city centre and his eyes are covered with a handkerchief. The child, who writes the names, acts the role of a sender saying for instance: I send a letter from Egypt to Lebanon. At this moment, the two players who bear the names of these countries exchange places. While they move in the circle, the blindfolded child (the postman) tries to catch one of them while they escape. If he (she) manages to seize either of them, he exchanges his role with the caught child; in addition to changing places with other children. If he fails to catch either of them, the sender says once again: I send a letter from Cairo to Alexandria, for example, and so on till the postman manages to catch one of the two players.

## **The Hunter and the sounds of animals**

This game requires a lot of space. A blindfolded child stands in the centre of a circle and holds a stick, and is surrounded by other children who clap, shout and run around him (her). The child in the centre strikes the ground with the stick three consecutive times to stop them, then points at a player who comes to him and holds the other end of the stick. Next, the child orders this player to imitate the sound of a cat, a lion, sheep, cock etc... The blindfolded child tries to recognize the voice of his play mate and if he succeeds, he is replaced by this

player and if he fails, he continues for another turn. The players should do their best to alter their voices as much as they can when they imitate the sounds of animals. They also should change their stature, either by bending their knees to be shorter, or standing on their toes to become taller. The blindfolded child can ask the player, who holds the other end of the stick to imitate the sound of three animals. If he fails to recognize them all, he points at another player and so on.

### **Touching in a Circle**

A circle is drawn on the ground and the children stand outside it, directing their faces towards the centre of the circle. A child called 'he who touches' stands in the centre. The game starts when the players jump in turns inside the circle, while their feet are joined together and their hands are raised forwards, at shoulder level. Meanwhile, the child in the centre tries to touch a player. If a player touches the child in the centre, he replaces him, while the child goes outside the circle to share in the jumping with his comrades.

### **The Handkerchief**

Two-seven member teams share in this game and face each other. Each two players who stand opposite to each other, take the same number. An umpire stands between the two teams at an equal distance and holds a handkerchief. When he calls a certain number (5 for instance), the number bearers from both teams come out and the one who manages to snatch the handkerchief and return to his place before the other touches it, becomes the winner and gets a point for his team. And if he returns after the other competitor touches the handkerchief, he loses a point. The

game continues in this way for the rest of players (without order) till one team obtains the required points to win.

### **The ball and numbers**

All the players stand around a circle. In the middle of this circle there is a football. Each player takes a number and all players turn round the circle. When an umpire calls for a certain number (2 for example), the number bearer runs quickly towards the ball and shoots it to strike one of his comrades running around in the circle. The number bearer wins if the ball touches a player, and that player will then be out of the game. If the ball does not touch anyone, this number bearer leaves the game. This continues till one person is left.

### **Hunting with a ball**

Two players face each other and stand at an appropriate distance, while other players stand between them. The two players start to throw a ball to one another in a way that it can touch one of the players in the middle. Meanwhile, the players in the middle try to evade being touched by the ball. Anyone who is touched by the ball, is out of the game, unless he manages to pick the ball up before it falls on the ground. In such a case he gets a point that he can either add to his team, keep as a chance if he is touched at any future time in the game or, in return of which, asks for one of his friends to re- enter the game. The game continues in this way till all players in the middle have been touched by the ball. At this moment, the players at the ends and in the middle exchange places..

## **Disobeying orders**

An umpire issues different orders such as: stand up-sit down-clap-keep silent-speak-laugh-cry... etc. Participants are asked to do the opposite of the orders issued. If the umpire says, for instance, 'sit down,' the players must stand up; and if he says 'laugh,' they must cry. The one, who disobeys the order (makes a mistake), is out of the game till one player remains and wins. It is preferable here that the umpire issues the orders quickly so that children get accustomed to concentrate.

## **Treasure hunt**

Each player is given 5 or more folded pieces of paper having the numbers (1,2,3,4 & 5.). Each piece of paper contains a certain job to be done by the player such as: run to the place of so and so, go to the place of so and so on a single foot, praise the Name of Allah one hundred times, Ask Allah's Forgiveness one hundred times...etc). When the game starts with a certain signal, each player takes the first piece of paper to carry out its content. After finishing this job, he (she) opens the other pieces of paper till he reaches the last one that leads him to a treasure. This final piece of paper may say: search around you to find the treasure, for example, under a tree, above a wall... The game ends when one of the players arrives at the treasure and wins a prize. The treasure may be an amount of money or a splendid toy, that may be given to the winner.

## **Tug of war**

Players are equally divided into two teams facing each other in a straight line. Each team holds an end of a strong rope. Two

points are marked on the ground, at which the first player of each team stands. A third point between the previous two points is also marked, paralleled by a fourth one on the rope itself. The game starts when each team tries to pull the other team towards them. The team, which manages to bring the opposing team together with the rope or the rope only to their space wins the game.

### **Musical chairs**

This game requires a lot of space where a number of players exceed the number of chairs by at least one person. The chairs are put in the middle of the space, in the form of two rows touching the backs of each other. All the players sit on the chairs except for one person. When an umpire blows a whistle, beats a drum or plays a recorder, the players start to turn run around the chairs till the sound made by the umpire stops. At this moment, the players hasten to sit on the chairs and he (she) who fails to find a seat, is out of the game. Every time a player is out, a chair is removed. The game continues in this way till there are two players running around one chair and the winner will be the one, who sits on the chair first.

### **Money transfer**

The children sit in two rows of equal number, opposite each other. At the end of each row, there is an empty chair on which a pound divided into five-piaster coins (20 units) is placed. When an umpire orders the start of the race, the last player of each row picks up a coin and gives it to the one sitting in front of him (her). The coin is thus transferred from one hand to another till it reaches the beginning of the row. As soon as the last player gives the coin to the one sitting in front of him, he picks up

another coin and does the same till he finishes the twenty coins and the whole pound reaches the beginning of the row. The team, who manage to transfer the pound before the other team, is the winner.



N.B. The players are only allowed to hold the coins with their right hands and they must transfer the money consecutively. If a player drops a coin, he is not permitted to take other coins before he picks it up..

### **Leap Frog**

A circle is drawn on the ground, and all players stand inside it. A child is chosen to act the part of frog. When the game starts, all the players run, followed by the child, who jumps like a frog and tries to touch them. The player, who is touched, turns into a frog too and accompanies the original frog in jumping after the other players and touching them till there is only one player, who wins the race.

N.B. If a player go out of the circle, he is out of the game and if the frog runs normally on his feet, he (she) is out of the game too.



## Fourth: Movement Games

Movement games are considered the first step towards physical fitness. These games include all activities that can help the child to perform his general actions more effectively. They are the first to be practiced by children. When satisfied or fed-up, a one-month old baby just makes any kind of movement using many parts of his body, especially his limbs. These kinds of games are divided into two groups:

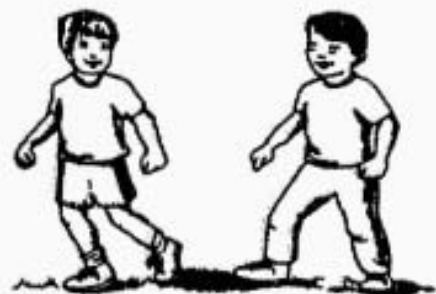
First: Games that teach children to perform consistent movements for particular goals, such as throwing a ball at targets or in a certain direction.

Second: Games that teach children to make strong movements, which depend on effort rather than consistency, such as running, jumping from a high place, rolling and throwing stones far away, etc...

Here is a group of movement games that we pray Allah to be of great use to our children.

### 1) Following the shadow

This game demands a wide place and a sunny day. Two children can share in this activity so that one of them acts as a guide and the other one



acts as a follower. When the game starts, the guide must run away and escape from the follower so that the latter cannot touch his (her) shadow. On his part, the follower tries to catch the guide and tread on his shadow with one of his feet. In order that the game is more interesting and exciting, we can set a 3-minute time limit, for instance, wherein the follower tries to touch the guide's shadow as many times as he (she) can. After the three minutes, the guide and the follower exchange roles and start playing for another three minutes and the one, who scores a larger number of touches wins the game.

## **2) Crossing the river**

This game requires a large space. Children are asked to make a river, one-meter wide, using two ropes as its banks and some sand as its beaches.



Then the children are asked to stand in a row, at a distance of between 5-7-metres from the first bank and be prepared to cross the river. They start running one after another and jumping to the other bank. He/She, who falls inside the river is out of the game. Then, the river is further widened and children compete again till one is the winner.

## **3) Visiting the cities**

This game needs a medium-sized space. Children are given a set of ropes and hoops and asked to make some adjacent cities. Each city consists of a hoop or a round rope. Then, each child must visit these cities on one foot. To make the game more interesting and exciting, the children are asked to visit the cities

in five minutes, for instance. He/She who manages to visit all the cities in the shortest time, provided his/her other foot does not touch the ground, is the winner. We can make the game more difficult by changing the place of the cities and defining a certain course to be followed.

#### **4) Tight rope walking**

The objective of this game is to teach children to balance themselves in an atmosphere of joy and fun. A rather thick rope is put on the ground and children are asked to walk on it, imagining that they are crossing a deep river full of dangerous creatures. To make this game more enjoyable for the children, they can be asked to form some letters of their names or some numbers by using the ropes and walk over them. Further, a walking race on the ropes can be held among children who are asked to walk quickly over the ropes without touching the ground or falling. He/She who passes over the rope in the shortest time and observes all the rules, becomes the winner.

#### **5) On the bridge**

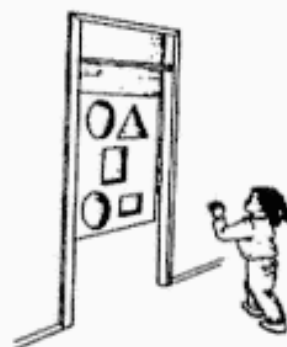
This is one of the favorite games for children because it is full of adventure, risk, joy, laughter and fun. A set of supports and boards are fastened in the form of bridges as shown in the following figure. Then, the children are asked to cross the bridges without falling onto the ground (in the river). To be more enjoyable, the children can join in a race to safely cross the bridges in the shortest time.

To ensure the children's safety supports and boards must be fixed well onto the ground. The height of the bridge must not

exceed 50 cm and children must be trained carefully on how to cross the bridges before the race. Meanwhile, some sand or carpets must be put under the bridges. Moreover, we can help younger children by holding them by the waist and leaving the upper part of the body (the hands and the trunk) to move easily.

## 6) Geometric targets

Some geometric shapes (a square, a rectangle, a triangle, a circle...etc) are drawn on a piece of plywood and then hollowed out. The board containing the shapes is hung in a suitable place like a playground or a large room. Children must be taught the names of the shapes.



The edges of each shape can be painted different colors, to help identify them. Each child is given a rubber ball to pass through these shapes at a distance of 3-5 metres. A race can be held among the children so that each child has the chance to throw the ball many times through the shapes. The one, who scores the highest, is the winner.

## 7) Balloon tennis

Children are fond of playing tennis with a rubber tennis ball but they enjoy themselves more playing balloon tennis. A court of 6-8 meters in length and 2-3 meters in width is drawn and then divided into two parts using a rope 1-2 meters high to act as a net. A player stands at each side, holding a racket with which he/she hits a balloon and observes the game rules. The one, who bursts the balloon, drops it inside his part or outside the part of his opponent, loses a point. The game consists of two 5- minute

halves. The player, who gets the largest number of points wins the match. The game can also be played with two players at each side of the court that can be further widened. Rackets can be replaced with hands or feet with a net of only one meter high.



## 8) Baseball

This game requires a large space, where a medium-sized ball is put on a suitable plastic base as shown in the following figure. Each child is given a racket to hit the ball with all his/her strength so as to reach the furthest point. Safety rules must be maintained here so that children are not harmed.

A race can be held among children in a way that a child strikes the ball once and the winner is the person, who records the longest distance. Each child can also strike the ball three times so that the whole distance of the three attempts is calculated. The one, who obtains the highest total score wins the game.



## 9) Basketball

Remove the bottom of a clean wastebasket, then fix the basket to a piece of aluminum or steel to be fastened to a tree or a door (without spoiling it). Each child is given 5 balls to throw inside the basket. The child, who manages to achieve the largest number of successful throws wins the game.

A large area of ground and bring two big wastebaskets are to be prepared. Next, a small court is drawn and fixed with the two baskets at each end, then the children are divided into two teams to play a 20-minute match with two halves according to the rules of basketball.



## 10) Golf

Bring a piece of wood in the shape of the letter 'L' to act as a hand, a set of hoops and ropes and a rubber tennis ball. Place the hoops and the ropes on a large area of ground in the shape of circles at close proximity from each other. Next, the ball is put on the ground at a suitable distance. Each child is asked to hit the ball with the wooden hand aiming for it to go inside one of the circles. A race can be held among the children so that each child gets the chance to strike the ball a certain number of times. The child, who has the highest score by having the most successful shots is the winner. We can change the distance between the baseline and the hoops as well as the size of the hoops according to the children's ages.



## 11) Jumping on the pyramid

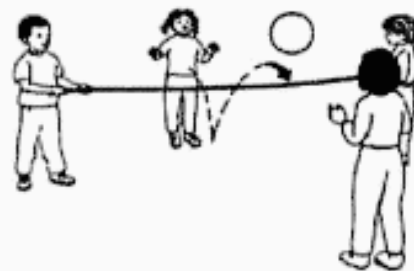
Bring a thin carpet or a piece of cloth and mark points for jumping in the shape of feet by using colors as shown in the

picture. These jumping points can also be marked on sand without colors or on muddy ground with colors.. Then, each child is asked to cross these points by leaping onto the printed feet. The player, who manages to leap onto these feet without falling is the winner. We can change the space between the feet in length and width according to the children's ages.



## **12) Throwing the ball over the rope**

Two children hold a rope at its ends and raise it to a certain height. Another child catches a softball (a volleyball or a rubber ball) and strikes it strongly against the ground so that it can cross the rope. If he/she manages to do this, he gets a point. Whenever this player succeeds in passing the ball in this way, the two children who hold the rope, raise it to a higher position till the ball cannot pass over it. The player, who manages to reach the highest point is the winner.



## **Fifth: Physical Exercises**

### **a) Adults can participate with children**

A female doctor from former Czechoslovakia, specialized in children's physical culture, carried out a pioneering and useful experiment. She called on parents to join their children in general play and in physical exercises in particular. The experiment shows that such exercises are of use to both adults and children in a manner that they satisfy their physical needs and strengthen family ties. The doctor founded a club for adults as well as for children, whose age ranged from two to five years. The membership of this club was dual 'a parent with his/her child.'

Following are a set of these exercises that can benefit both adults and children alike, and can be practiced at home since they do not require large areas.

#### **Exercise 1**

We often see adults swaying children, but in order to swing children in a correct way, you should hold them under their armpits. A mother raises a child, in a bending position, forwards and downwards, then forwards and upwards. The repetition of these two movements provides the child with ideal swinging movements as shown in the figure.



We notice here that this exercise is useful in strengthening the mother's trunk and developing the child's balance.

### Exercise 2

Parents need to strengthen their back muscles. The exercise shown here achieves this goal. The parent lies down on his (her) hands and feet and raises the rest of his body, while the child passes below him, as a way



of training on movement skills by crossing human barriers. The child can also get on the back of his father or mother during the exercise.

### Exercise 3

A father plays a great part in sharing physical exercises with his children. The following exercise shows how the father's body can help his child develop the skills of balance, mounting and climbing. The father holds the child by his arms, while the child moves up his father's



leg. The father can urge the child to be more active and enthusiastic by holding something in his mouth, which he likes.

### Exercise 4

This is an innovative way to develop swaying. A child holds his (her) father's neck while the father holds the child by his buttocks as illustrated in the figure. The father then starts swaying the child gradually, either upward and downward or

sideways in a circular form. This exercise is beneficial for children through acquainting them to swinging in the air and keeping balance in such a position, and it is also useful training for adults to carry weights and strengthen trunk muscles.

### Exercise 5

A father cooperates with a mother in the exercise shown below. They entangle their hands beneath the buttocks and the back of their child and help him (her) sit comfortably. Next, they walk sideways, forwards and backwards or swing the child forwards and backwards or downwards and upwards. This is useful for the children, and it also strengthens the arm muscles of adults directly and their leg muscles indirectly.



### Exercise 6

Parents are always asked to learn how to carry a child in a sound, useful and healthy way. The following exercise shows how a mother carries her daughter by the left arm and leg and rotates to swing her slowly then quickly. This exercise benefits children in two ways: first, it helps the shoulder and thigh joints to be flexible and second: it trains the child on movement balance in this unusual position. As for the adults, it helps them keep balance and move briskly by changing the position of the body while rotating to sway the child. This exercise can be practiced several times according to how far the participants are ready to continue without becoming



exhausted. Furthermore, we must change the side of the child's arms and legs from time to time.

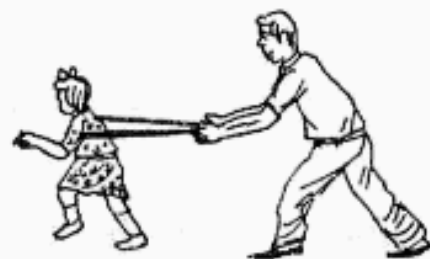
### Exercise 7

This exercise has the same effect as the previous one, though it is a bit more difficult for children as they have to maintain balance while being swung in the air. Meanwhile, the exercise is more difficult for adults as a child is firmly carried with a father's right hand and a mother's left hand. Then both of them support the child with the other hand while swaying, rotating, standing or sitting with the child.



### Exercise 8

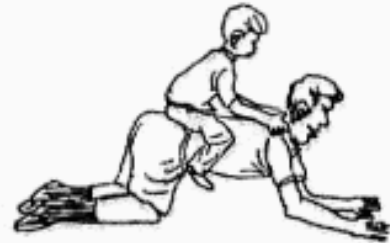
A horse is imitated by using a suitable rope like a bridle, as shown in the figure. First, a father runs like a horse, while his child holds the two ends of the rope; then they exchange roles. This exercise activates the blood circulation of both adults and children, in addition to enhancing the child's imagination and other physical benefits.



### Exercise 9

Adults badly need exercises that are useful for the back to avoid curvature resulting from sitting at desks etc. The exercise illustrated in the following figure shows how carrying a child in a horizontal kneeling position and lying down on the hands and

the knees gives a child much pleasure and keeps him balanced, in addition to activating the back muscles of adults.



## **b) Exercises with the help of home furniture**

Some people say that children are not encouraged to practice physical exercises at home due to lack of sporting facilities and sufficient area. How then can we cope with this problem?

We can say that if we really want our children to have physical exercise at home in a simple and inexpensive way, we should first set aside a certain area for playing inside the house. This fixed place helps children to be disciplined and evade possible injuries. Next, we can overcome the lack of sporting facilities through using some pieces of furniture to perform physical exercises so that this furniture remains intact.

Following are some physical exercises in which furniture is used in an easy, exciting and useful way:

### **Pieces of cloth and a small stick**

The remains of some cloth, marbles and small sticks can be used in a number of very important exercises that prevent flat feet that can adversely affects a child's body. The following figures present a set of such exercises. Figure 'a' shows how a child can hold a piece of cloth between his/her toes and raise it upwards several times using his right and left feet respectively. Figure 'b' has the same aim through using marbles, in a way that the child holds them between his toes and raises them from the

floor without using his hands. This exercise should be done several times using both feet together. In Figure 'c,' the child holds a ruler or a small stick with both feet, raises it from the floor and waits for a while before returning it to its place.



Adults can share these exercises with children for the sake of avoiding flat feet and strengthening back and leg muscles.

### **Billow cover**

This is another interesting exercises. Here we use a 'billow cover,' a 'clean sack' or any similar thing, which is open from both sides. A child enters from one side and quickly creeps out from the other side. This exercise helps the child to creep inside a cover that represents an abnormal condition, thus controlling the movement of his/her body. Moreover, the exercise inspires the child to more adventure, courage and boldness. The cover or the sack can be long or short; straight or curved; and tight or large according to the child's age.

### **Chair and carpet**

A chair and a piece of carpet, cloth or matting are used as shown in the figure. A child lies on his/her back and holds the front legs of a chair with both hands. Next, he/she raises his legs forwards and upwards to touch the seat of the chair with his feet slowly and then returns to his former position. This exercise strengthens the stomach and thigh muscles.



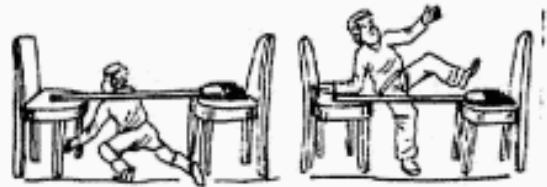
### **Chair only**

A chair is used in an exercise that adds to the flexibility of his thigh.. A child stands and puts one hand on the back of a chair. Next, he/she moves his/her right leg sideways and upwards till he touches his foot with his fingers (This comes through training). Keeping the knee and the foot straight, the child can do this exercise several times, using right and left legs respectively.



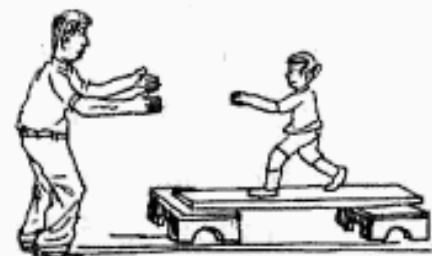
### **Chair and broom**

Two chairs and a broom can be used for training on crossing barriers up and down. A child should not touch the broom, so that it will not fall and harm him. This exercise resembles high jumping and barrier training. A mattress should be put under the broom to guarantee safety and the height of the chair should be suitable to the child's height in order to avoid injury.



### **Bellow and board**

Parents can help their children train to keep balance by means of bellows or low chairs and a board as shown in the figure below. The height of the chairs and the length of the board are determined according to the



child's age. Training on maintaining balance is considered one of the most important skills after a child walks well. Moreover, children feel happy and amused in such an exercise as it contains some adventure and risk.

### **Scarecrow**

Home games have both physical and entertainment benefits. The following figure shows how to use a scarecrow in training to develop accuracy. You can make a scarecrow



from pieces of wood or sticks of firewood with the remnants of cloth and colored cardboard. A ball is aimed and thrown at a distance of 3-4 meters. The child is required to drop something hanging from the scarecrow.

### **Empty bottles**

We can notice in the next figure a different kind of training in accuracy. A ball is thrown at empty plastic bottles at a distance of 3-4 meters. These bottles can be replaced with empty fruit cans or wooden posts.



### **Chair, table and broom**

The following figure shows one of the funniest exercises that use home tools. A race is made among children using two chairs, a broom, two low chairs, a table and a large ball.



The race starts like this: crossing the first barrier under the

broom, getting onto the first low chair, creeping along the table, landing on the second low chair and holding the ball, then shooting it at a target hanging on the wall. The race could be more or less complicated according to children's ages and the facilities present in the house. Adults must supervise this exercise, and the floor must not be solid and all dangerous obstacles must be removed.

### **A wall and a sheet of paper**

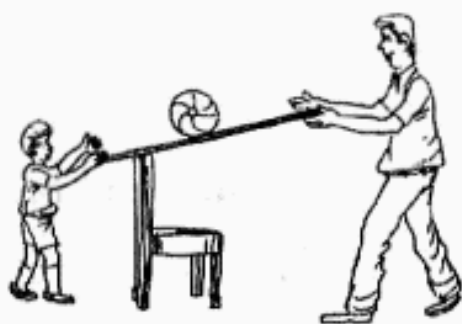
A wall can be used in an interesting game. A sheet of paper, on which a round target is drawn, is hung on the wall. Children stand and shoot 10 shots each.



The one, who throws successfully at the target more times than the others, is the winner. The children should be 3-4 meters away from the wall and the ball should be suitable to the size of the children.

### **Chair and board**

The next figure shows us an exercise that requires the use of a chair, a board and a ball. The father rolls the ball from up to down the sloping board, while his child tries to catch it before it falls to the ground.



An older child can stand at a distance and when the father starts to roll the ball, he/she runs to hold it before it falls. The child then pushes the ball on the sloping board in the direction of the father while the older child throws it



at a distance. The ball can be replaced with any other round body of medium weight. This exercise strengthens arm muscles when the child throws the ball strongly to the father.

### **c) Exercises that enhance the ability to study**

#### **Exercise 1:**

Sit down on a chair

Stretch your knees forward

Raise your arms sideways...  
backwards



Take a deep breath while your  
back is straight

Lower your arms while exhaling

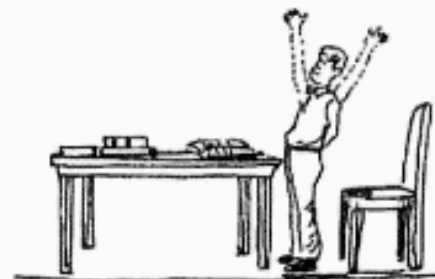
Repeat the exercise five times

#### **Exercise 2:**

Stand up and bend your arms over  
your shoulders

Stretch your arms upwards while  
inhaling

Bend and lower your arms while  
exhaling



Repeat the exercise five times

#### **Exercise 3:**

Stand up

Bend your knees up to your chest alternately (the right then  
the left)

Use your hands to help bend your knees to your chest

Check that your body is straight and balanced

Repeat the exercise seven times

**Exercise 4:**

Stand up with your arms out sideways

Turn your trunk in a vertical position to the right, then to the left

Check that your feet are stable on the ground

Move slowly with relaxed muscles

Repeat the exercise seven times

**Exercise 5:**

Stand with your arms forward

Bend your knees completely while sitting slowly

Stretch your knees while standing slowly

Check that your body is straight and balanced

Repeat the exercise seven times

**Exercise 6**

Stand, with your hands on your waist

Bend your trunk alternately to the right and to the left



Move your arms downwards while bending

Regulate inhalation

Repeat the exercise five times

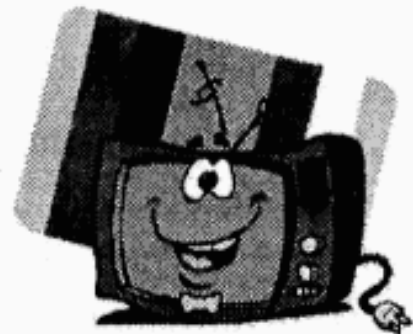




## Chapter Six

### The House Theater

Having a house theatre doesn't mean that people should waste their time or spoil their efforts. On the contrary, it stresses the love and care we cherish for our children. A family theater will secure educational, spiritual, scientific, psychological and moral benefits such as:



- Children will spend their time in useful things.
- They will be provided with the means to express their abilities and potential in doing good actions instead of using them for evil.
- A theater is a far better alternative than the television.
- Many good characteristics such as positivism, courage and self-confidence will be inculcated in them especially when they act in plays themselves, contrary to the television which teaches them to be passive. They will have the opportunity to learn about historical events and incidents and this information about events and characters will be well established in their minds.

- A theater is a good means of propagating noble morals. A child that plays the role of a liar will find it difficult to tell lies in his real life.
- A theater is an effective method of treating some bad manners and habits. For instance, a child who watches a play revolving round telling lies and the evil destiny awaiting the liar, will realize how bad this trait is and will try his best to shun it in future.
- A theater teaches the children how to co-operate with one another for the production of the performance.

These benefits and many others support the call and need for a theater in every house. It does not require a large space. The matter is very simple. What we mean is just that the children should help their father or elder brother prepare an act or a play about a story they have read or another play they have watched. Each of them plays out a role in the act. This family work (the play or the act) may be carried out while the family is on a picnic or during a summer night when all family members are free. This means that they will make use of their leisure time in useful ways. When we think about a family theater and the best way to utilize it, we will come to know that it has a very significant social dimension. Instead of gathering the family members to watch the video or the TV, they can be gathered to watch their children's own production. Furthermore, the neighbor's and the relative's children can take part in making the act. This can be carried out on vacations, feasts, and happy occasions where the need for love, affection and fraternity is much greater. Parents should not think of the matter as being difficult, for step by step it will be developed.

A parent might say that this theater deceives the children and makes them an easy prey to fancy and thus far from reality. In this way, they will not be able to face and endure the difficulties of real life. To those parents, we say that children should be taught everything in this life whether good or bad.

We also say that, 'May Allah bless you for your keenness to raise strong children, but would you pay heed to the following words of the scholars of education? They state that naturally, a child daydreams. Sometimes he may feel as if he were flying like a butterfly or swimming like a fish. If this natural feeling is suppressed, a child will feel frustrated and become introverted, lacking self-confidence. The best way to make use of these daydreams is to allow the child to play the role of the great characters such as *Mujahideen* and heroes. In this way, his inner desire will be given vent and his wish to be charitable will be realized as he plays the role of a charitable person. This leads us to say that acting is the best way of attaching a child's dreams to reality. Through imitation a child will learn how to express his ideas and show his talents in a form of reality he himself creates as he plays the role of this character."

## **Steps towards Establishing a Family Theater**

There are two forms of theaters. One where people play the roles of the characters and another where the characters of a play or an act are performed by puppets. Both kinds can easily be established in the house by following these steps:

### **Steps of establishing an ordinary theater**

A story or a play should be read and understood thoroughly and its events deeply absorbed by the actors.

Each family member should choose the role that suits his character.

The circumstances and time of the occurrence of the story should be discussed.

A certain time for discussing every character and the best way this character is to be presented should be specified.

The play or the act should then be performed.

The work and the performance of the participants should be evaluated to reward those who performed well. The question then should be raised, 'What should we deduce from the story and how can we turn such lessons into a play ?'



## **Steps for establishing a puppet theater**

First of all, Select a story, read it and relate it in a detailed and easy manner to the children.

Nominate the characters of the play and give every child the role he will play.

The puppets are to be suitable to the characters they represent. Cheap materials such as thread, paper and pieces of wood can be used. A child should take part in making the puppets.

Discuss the setting and the incidents and thus prepare the available spectacles.

A part of the discussion is to be dedicated to the characters of the play so as to reach the best way to represent them.

Training sessions are to be conducted. The preparation process can take from 7 to 15 days so that the children feel accustomed to the characters they are going to role play. It is even better to call each child by the name of the character he will represent.

Perform the play. This can be done in two ways. A child may carry the puppet and appear before the audience to play the role. This case resembles the other form where people play the roles (in which puppets are not involved). The second way is that a wooden box or the like is to be brought and placed as if it were a stage. The children carrying the puppets may hide behind this stage so that only the puppets are shown to the audience.

Evaluate the performance and the most excellent performance is to be highlighted and rewarded.

Finally, the lessons deduced from the play are to be defined and put into practice.

## **Your Child in the Shade of the Glorious Qur'an**

On the authority of Al-Hakim, Buraidah reported that the Prophet, (PBUH), said, *'The parents of whoever recites the Qur'an, learns it and acts in accordance with its teachings, will be crowned, on the day of Resurrection, with light that resembles the Sun. In addition, they (his parents) will be dressed in two garments that have no parallel in this world. They (the parents) will ask, 'Why are we dressed in these garments?' The answer will be, 'That is because your child has memorized.'*" Abu Dawoud reported on the authority of Sahl ibn Mu`adh that the Prophet, (PBUH), said, *"He who recites the Qur'an and acts according to its teachings, his parents will be blessed, on the day of Resurrection, with a crown, the light of which is better than the light of the Sun."*

The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) heeded the importance of teaching the Qur'an to their children and turned the matter into practice. Mus`ab ibn Sa`d ibnu-Abi Waqqas, (may Allah be pleased with them both), reported that his father reported the Prophet, (PBUH), as having said, *"The best of you is he who learns the Qur'an and teaches it."* Mus`ab further said, *"And my father took me and made me sit down and said, 'Now, recite!'"*

At-Tabarani reported that Anas ibn Malik, (may Allah be pleased with him), was of the habit of gathering his family, once he had finished reciting all of the Qur'an, and supplicating Allah for them. Al-Hakim reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas, (may Allah be pleased with him), that he said, "Ask 'me regarding Surat An-Nisa, for I used to recite it while I was young."

This was the course followed by our pious predecessors and the following generation. In the preface of his book "*Al-Mu`alimeen*," Ibn Sahnun wrote, "The pious judge `Isa ibn Miskeen used to teach his daughters and granddaughters the Qur'an. `Iyad said: 'After `Asr prayer, he used to call his daughters and nieces and teach them the Qur'an and knowledge. Before him, this was the trait of Asab ibn Al-Furat (the great Muslim leader and conqueror of Sicily) with his daughter Asmaa' who attained a prominent position in the field of knowledge.'"

The matter was even greater in the hearts of Muslims to the extent that the children themselves cared a great deal about learning the Qur'an. It was reported that while Al-Farazdaq was still young, his father took him to the circle of `Ali ibn Abi Talib, (may Allah be pleased with him), and said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful! Listen to my son, for he is the poet of the tribe of Mudar." Ali, (may Allah be pleased with him), said to him, "Teach him the Qur'an!" The man took his son back to their dwellings. When they there had returned, Al-Farazdaq entered the mosque and tied himself to the column and swore not to untie himself until he had finished the memorizing all of the Qur'an. His family tried in vain to persuade him to untie

himself. He kept his word and fulfilled his vow. He used to untie himself only when he wanted to perform ablution and when it was time to pray.

Here the question arises as to the age at which a child should begin to memorize the Qur'an. In response, we quote Al-Khatib Al-Bughdady in his book '*Al-Kifayah Fi 'Ilm Ar-Riwayah*' that reads, 'Ibraheem ibn Sa'id Al-Jawhary said, 'I saw a child of four being carried to the Caliph Al-Ma'mun after he had completed memorizing the Qur'an and learnt some of its interpretation. However, he used to cry once he felt hungry.' In addition, Abu Muhammad `Abdullah ibn Muhammad ibn `Abdur-Rahman Al-Asbahany said, 'I memorized the whole Qur'an when I was five years of age and was carried to Abu Bakr Al-Muqri' to listen and learn from him when I was only four.' Abu `Asim said, 'I took my child to Ibn Juraij while he had not yet reached the age of three, to teach him the Qur'an and the *Hadith*.' Abu `Asim added, 'There is nothing wrong in teaching the child the *Hadith* and the Qur'an at this very early age.'"

The wisdom behind this early learning is mentioned by Al-Hafiz As-Suyuti who wrote, 'Teaching the children the Qur'an is one of the basics of Islam. Letting children develop the habit of reciting the Qur'an is in tune with their innate nature and implants the light of wisdom in their hearts before they are blackened with sin and mischief.' Stressing this concept, Ibn Khaldun wrote, 'Teaching the child the Qur'an is one of the duties of the religion and a trait of the followers of Islam. This makes the heart of the child firm and fixed upon the teachings of the Qur'an and the creed of faith. Thus, the Qur'an represents the basis for all other forms of learning.'

It can well be concluded that neither success nor prosperity can be achieved in this world and in the afterlife unless we turn back to the Qur'an, memorizing it and teaching it to our children. This is to be done with understanding. In addition, we should apply it to our practical life without negligence. A family Theater is nothing more than a mere step towards the achievement of this goal, for it helps our children understand, memorize and act in accordance with the Qur'an in a very easy and simple manner. This can be carried out in two ways:

### **First Method:**

We, in addition to our children, can perform an act explaining the meaning of some verses or a Qur'anic occasion of revelation or a play based on a Qur'anic story. At the end of the play, a child may stand and recite the relevant verses. This will help the children to understand and memorize the verses and to turn the verses into real action.

I would like to cite a real example here. One of my friends told me that he and his friends performed a play entitled 'Reckoning One's Self' based on the verses of Surat Ibraheem. At the end of the play, one of the performers recited the verses, ﴿And Satan said, When the matter has been decided: Lo! Allah promised you a promise of truth; and I promised you, then failed you. And I had no power over you save that I called unto you and you obeyed me. So blame me not, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. Lo! I disbelieved in that which you before ascribed to me. Lo! for wrong doers is a painful doom.﴾ (Ibraheem: 22) My friend swears that up until that time, he had never thought deeply about the meaning of the verses and that the play

helped him to understand and absorb the meaning of the verses and now eight years after performing the play, he still remembers the meanings well.

In the following pages, we will give some illustrative examples of some plays based on the Qur'an.

## Owners of the Garden

(Three brothers sitting inside their house)

**Hasan:** What about our garden?

**Hosam:** Its fruit is ripe and ready to harvest, so let's collect it!

**Sadiq:** Don't forget the poor and remember that this fruit is but a gift from Allah and we should show gratitude by paying the poor their due.

**Hasan:** But why should we give them the outcome of our efforts?

**Hosam:** They have to work so as to reap.

**Sadiq:** What if we were in their shoes? Remember that all this fruit is a gift from Allah and a test for us.

**Hasan:** This is always your nature Sadiq. You always try to support the poor. Stop this fuss! Think of the bright future, money and power.

**Hosam:** You are quite right Hasan. Then, what shall we do?

**Hasan:** Tomorrow morning, we should hurry to the garden, and collect the fruit before the poor arrive for their share. When they come, they will find nothing and we can then say that we have lost everything and the garden stands as evidence for this.

**Hosam:** What a good idea! Now, let us go to bed so we will be ready to rush to the garden tomorrow morning! (laughing noisily)

**Sadiq:** It is up to you anyway. But remember that I do not agree with you.

(While all were sleeping, a plague destroyed their garden completely)

(Next morning)

**Hasan:** Get up men! It is now time to get up and reap our harvest!

**Hosam:** Yes, yes. It really is time to get up. Come on Sadiq

(The three men walk to the garden and there they find the surprise)

**Hasan:** What is that? We must have lost our way!

**Sadiq:** No! It is really our garden.

**Hosam:** I cannot believe my eyes. It has turned into a dry, barren plot of land. Now, it is worth absolutely nothing. Alas! Alas!

**Sadiq:** Remember how I repeatedly advised and warned you and told you that it is a blessing and deserves thanks. Now, we have been deprived of the favor due to our miserliness and ingratitude. Hasan and Hosam: We have truly been misled. We are indeed losers. We admit our guilt. We were transgressors!

(A child recites the verses)

*﴿Lo! We have tried them as We tried the owners of the garden when they vowed they would pluck its fruit the next*

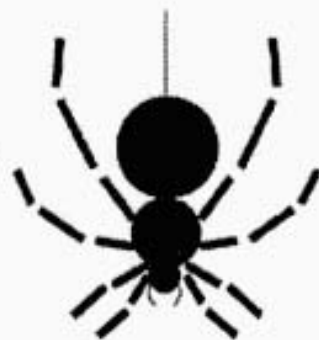


*morning. And made no exception (for the will of Allah); Then a visitation came upon it while they slept. And in the morning it was as if plucked. And they cried out one unto another in the morning, Saying: Run unto your field if you would pluck (the fruit). So they went off, saying one unto another in low tones: No needy man shall enter it today against you. They went betimes, strong in (this) purpose. But when they saw it, they said: Lo! we are in error! Nay, but we are desolate! The best among them said: Said I not unto you: Why glorify you not (Allah)? They said: Glorified be our Lord! Lo! we have been wrong doers. Then some of them drew near unto others, self reproaching. They said: Alas for us! In truth we were outrageous. It may be that our Lord will give us better than this in place thereof. Lo! we beseech our Lord. Such was the punishment. And verily the punishment of the Hereafter is greater if they did but know. ﴿*

(Al-Qalam:17-33)

## The Weak House

(Huda's family has just returned from a journey. The mother began dusting the house. Huda helped her mother. As Huda saw a cobweb, she tried to remove it so as to clean the wall. Suddenly, a voice was heard...)



**The Spider:** Stop Huda! Do not destroy my web!

Huda: Your web is really defacing the wall.

**The Spider:** (smiling) This web makes it easy for you to get rid of flies and insects that carry diseases.

**Huda:** You may be right.

**The Spider:** (boasting) I am quite right! Any insect that falls in my web can never escape. My web is really strong.

**Huda:** (smiling) No, your web is so weak. Almighty Allah says: *﴿The likeness of those who choose other patrons than Allah is as the likeness of the spider when she takes unto herself a house, and lo! the frailest of all houses is the spider's house, if they but knew.﴾* (Al-`Ankabut: 41) O.K. Let me try this broom to see if I can remove you.

**The Spider:** No please! Remember that a spider once stretched its web over the entrance of the cave where the Prophet,

(peace be upon him), and his Companion Abu Bakr stayed. The polytheists could not see the Prophet at that time.

**Huda:** (smiling) You have reminded me of the great day of *Hijra*. It was the day when truth gained victory and light began to cover various places. I will not kill you.

**The Spider:** Then, what are you going to do?

**Huda:** I have to clean my room, for I like to always see it clean. You have to leave right now. I have no other choice but to destroy your house so that no impurities or dirty things accumulate in it. Goodbye spider!

**The Spider:** Goodbye Huda!

**(A child recites the verses:** ﴿If you help him not, still Allah helped him when those who disbelieve drove him forth, the second of two; when they two were in the cave, when he said unto his comrade: Grieve not. Lo! Allah is with us. Then Allah caused His peace of reassurance to descend upon him and supported him with hosts you cannot see, and made the word of those who disbelieved the nethermost, while Allah's word it was that became the uppermost. Allah is Mighty, Wise.﴾ (At-Tawbah: 40))

## **Second Method:**

Some plays might include roles in which the characters use some verses of the Qur'an in their speech or dialogue. While playing the role, the child will memorize these verses. Furthermore, this will help him memorize them perfectly. It is better that the plays be brief and concentrate on a certain number of verses. In addition, such verses are to be recited in the play. Following are some examples:

## Etiquette of Seeking Permission

Almighty Allah says: ﴿O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own without first announcing your presence and invoking peace upon the folk thereof. That is better for you, that you may be heedful.﴾ (An-Nur:27)

(Khalid and his friend Faseeh are standing in front of the house of their friend Ahmad. The door is open.)

**Khalid:** Look Faseeh! Ahmad's door is open. We can enter.

**Faseeh:** What do you mean Khalid?

**Khalid:** If we enter quickly, it will be a great surprise for Ahmad, won't it?

**Faseeh:** But this is wrong behavior. If we do this we would be guilty of violating Ahmad's privacy and may hurt his feelings.

**Khalid:** Why?

**Faseeh:** Have you forgotten what we learned at school Khalid?

**Khalid:** I cannot remember. Please remind me Faseeh!

**Faseeh:** Our teacher taught us that we should knock on the doors of others and seek their permission to enter. Now, we should close the door and then knock on it.

**Khalid:** Yes. Now, I remember.

**Faseeh:** Do you remember the verse that teaches us this great moral?

**Khalid:** Yes. Allah says: ﴿ *O ye who believe! Enter not houses other than your own without first announcing your presence and invoking peace upon the folk thereof. That is better for you, that you may be heedful.* ﴾ Allah is the Most Truthful.

**Faseeh:** You are right! May Allah reward you Khalid. Now, let's act according to this verse.

## Ahmad Loves Allah

Almighty Allah says: ﴿Those who believe are stauncher in their love for Allah,﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 165)

(Ahmad is back home while his clothes are dirty. He was playing football and fell on the ground. Tiptoeing to his room, he sees his mother and so he hurriedly enters his grandpa's room. He hears his grandpa reciting the verse ﴿Those who believe are stauncher in their love for Allah,﴾)

**Ahmad:** Peace be with you grandpa!

**Grandpa:** Peace and blessings be with you too Ahmad.

**Ahmad:** What does this verse mean grandpa?

**Grandpa:** (taking off his glasses) It refers to those who believe in Allah and worship Him.

**Ahmad:** Does Allah love them in return?

**Grandpa:** Yes and makes them enter Paradise and reside therein forever.

**Ahmad:** (happily pointing to himself) Ok grandpa! I love Allah.

**Grandpa:** (Smiling lightly) Ahmad! If you want Allah to love you, you should act like those who love Allah.

**Ahmad:** Who are those people who enjoy Allah's love?

**Grandpa:** Almighty Allah loves all those truthful people who stick to the truth and never tell lies.

**Ahmad:** (hesitating) Grandpa! I have not told lies. I just intended to tell mum something other than the truth so as to avoid making her angry. Now, if I tell her the truth. Will Allah love me?

**Grandpa:** Yes. Allah loves those who tell the truth.

Ahmad: Allah loves me (he jumps out of happiness and moves to the door leaving).

**Grandpa:** But Allah is beautiful and loves all those who are beautiful and clean.

**Ahmad:** (looking to his dirty clothes) You are quite right grandpa. How can Allah love me while I am dirty like this. (thinking for a moment) I will be back in a moment grandpa.

**Grandpa:** Ok son.

**Ahmad:** (Moves to his wardrobe, takes out some clothes and enters the bathroom to have a shower. Then, he stands before the mirror to comb his hair and goes back to his grandpa) Now, what do you think grandpa?

**Grandpa:** You are clean now Ahmad.

(His mother enters the room and asks what is going on. As Ahmad tells her the truth she is happy with him.)

**Ahmad:** I have told the truth and became clean. Will Allah love me?

**Grandpa:** Surely yes son. Allah loves those who are clean and those who tell the truth.

**Ahmad:** (jumping) Well, well. Allah loves me and I do love Almighty Allah.

**Grandpa & Mother:** (smiling) May Allah love you Ahmad.

**All recite:** ﴿Yet of mankind are some who take unto themselves objects of worship which they set as) rivals to Allah, loving them with a love like (that which is the due) of Allah (only) Those who believe are stauncher in their love for Allah, than those who do evil had but known, (on the day) when they behold the doom, that power belongs wholly to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment! True are the words of Allah.﴾



## Ibraheem's Birds

**Almighty Allah says:** ﴿And when Abraham said (unto his Lord): My lord! Show me how You give life to the dead. He said: Dost thou not believe? Abraham said: Yes, but (I ask) in order that my heart may be at ease. (His Lord) said: Take four birds and cause them to incline unto thee, then place a part of them on each hill, then call them, they will come to thee in haste. And know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.﴾ (Al-Baqarah: 260)

(Grandpa sitting in his room while his granddaughter enters)

**Asma:** Peace be upon you dear grandpa!

**Grandpa:** Peace be upon you my sweet girl. Have you fed the birds?

**Asma:** Yes and collected the eggs, cleaned the pan and put fresh water for them. Strange enough, I found an egg smaller than all the others.

**Grandpa:** A smaller hen might have laid it.

**Asma:** I have a question grandpa. Why don't hens have front legs like other animals?

**Grandpa:** A hen already has four legs; two behind and another two in the form of wings. The body, being covered with feathers, helps the bird to fly.

**Asma:** I heard in my school that the temperature of a hen is fixed.

**Grandpa:** In addition, it has two larynxes.

**Asma:** Well, now I know many things about hens.

**Grandpa:** You are a good girl and I am going to tell you a beautiful story about birds.

**Asma:** May Allah reward you abundantly grandpa. I am all ears!

**Grandpa:** The Prophet Ibraheem, (peace be upon him), prayed to Allah and said: *﴿My lord! Show me how You give life to the dead,﴾* Almighty Allah asked him: *"Do you not believe?"* and Ibraheem answered: *"Yes, but (I ask) in order that my heart may be at ease.﴾*

**Asma:** Ibraheem was quite sure that Allah's power is infinite!!

**Grandpa:** Surely yes. Allah willed the answer to be practical one. Almighty Allah told him: *﴿Take four birds and cause them to incline unto thee, then place a part of them on each hill, then call them, they will come to thee in haste. And know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.﴾*

**Asma:** Then what did Prophet Ibraheem do grandpa?

**Grandpa:** He took four birds of different kinds, slaughtered them and mixed their bodily parts and placed every part on a mountain.

**Asma:** What about the heads, grandpa?

**Grandpa:** He kept them with him. Then, he asked the dead birds to come walking. The parts of the birds came.

**Asma:** Glory be to Allah! And did they come together, the parts became one body again?

**Grandpa:** Yes and when Ibraheem put the heads near to the bodies, every bird became again attached to its head.

**Asma:** Glorified be Allah, He has power over all things!

**Grandpa:** Yes, He quickens the dead after it is turned into dust.

## Your Child in the Shade of Allah's Fairest Names

Almighty Allah says: ﴿Allah's are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them. And leave the company of those who blaspheme His names. They will be requited for what they do.﴾ (Al-A`raf: 180)

Out of Allah's mercy, He taught us His Names and guided us how to use them to supplicate to Him. If we just imagine a person leading his life while being in the dark with the Names of his Creator and while having no access to implore Him, we will realize that life will be very difficult in such a state. Almighty Allah guided people to His Names and made such Names a way of seeking His mercy. Abu Hurairah reported the Prophet, (PBUH), as saying: "Allah has 99 Names, a hundred minus one. He who learns them will enter Paradise. Almighty Allah is One (odd) and loves all things that are odd." This means that a Muslim who learns such Names, clings to them, and acts according to their significance is really successful.

Imam Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi points out the importance of grasping the meanings of the Fairest Names of Allah and acting according to their meanings and says: "The verse denotes that a Muslim is to use these in his supplication. In order to use such Names, a Muslim should learn the meanings of such Names. In

addition, he should be sure that these Fairest Attributes and Fairest Names belong to Allah, his Creator. In this way, he will be able to use such Names in his supplication."

Based on the above, it is clear that it is very important to teach our children the meanings of these Names and raise them on the morals deduced from them. To make the meanings of such Names run deep in the heart of the child, we can use the family Theater. Following are some samples of plays based on the Fairest Names of Allah.

## Allah, The All-Seeing

(A Sheikh is sitting in the mosque with some children teaching them the Qur'an. Together they recite the verse: ﴿Naught is as His likeness; and He is the Hearer, the Seer.﴾)

**Sheikh:** Now, does any one have any questions?

**Ahmad:** I have a simple question Sheikh!

**Sheikh:** Yes son.

**Ahmad:** Why do you love our brother Abdullah most?

**Sheikh:** Because he grasps well the meanings of Allah's fairest Names.

**Ahmad:** How?

**Sheikh:** Tomorrow, I will show you this practically. Now, it is time to go home.

**Sheikh:** (next day) Gives a basket of apples to the children and says: "Each one of you must take an apple and eat it in a place where no one can see him, okay?" (The children rush to the basket and take their apples. Abdullah waits till the Sheikh calls him and gives him his apple.)

**Sheikh:** (An hour later all the children are back) Let each one tell me where he ate his apple.

**Ahmad:** I went to the desert and nobody could see me.

**Samir:** I ate it on the roof of our house and no one was there.

**Khalid:** As for me, I hid in the garden and ate it.

**Sheikh:** Now, what about you Abdullah? Where did you eat your apple?

**Abdullah:** Here is my apple. I have not eaten it. I could not find a place where nobody could see me, for Allah sees me in any place.

**Sheikh:** May Allah bless you son. Really, Allah sees us in every place. We cannot hide ourselves from Him. ﴿ *Naught is as His likeness; and He is the Hearer, the Seer.* ﴾ Is it now clear to you Ahmad?

**Ahmad:** May Allah bestow on you good recompense our Sheikh and make it easy for us all to behave in accordance with the Fairest Names of Allah. Amen!

## Allah, The Sustainer

(A father sits with his children in the house. They are sad because they are poor and in debt.)

**Father:** There is, *Insha'a* Allah, a solution.

**Ahmad:** What is that dad?

**Father:** I can leave you and travel to a faraway place to seek provision. I may be there for a long period of time, but I will be back with provision *Insha'a* Allah.

**Mother:** May Allah help you. We are really sad that you leave us but hope this may solve the problem.

**Ahmad and his sister Hind:** May Allah keep you safe dad. Return safe and sound. (the father shakes hands with them and then leaves)

**Ahmad:** (dad has left) We have a palm tree. We can eat its dates till dad comes back home.

**Hind:** And we can drink the milk of our cow, it is really delicious and healthy.

**Mother:** We also have hens. We have their meat and eggs. Praise be to Allah. (they sit down to eat but the weather changes. The sound of thunder can be heard and it begins to rain.).



**Ahmad:** (running to the window) Mum, it is a storm coming near.

**Hind:** (moving to the window) Mum, the storm is destroying the palm tree, and the cow, Alas!

**Ahmad:** The palm tree is now destroyed! What are we going to eat?

**Hind:** The cow is dead and also the chickens. I am afraid. Where are you dad?

**Mother:** Feel no fear dear. Allah has created us and it is He who will protect us. It is He Who provides for us. After our palm tree is destroyed and our cow is dead, He will give us a better compensation. We are to pray to Him only.

(They begin to supplicate and someone knocks on the door)

**Ahmad:** It seems to be dad!

**Mother:** Who is there?

**Father:** It is I your husband.

(Ahmad opens the door and he and Hind hug their father)

**Father:** Almighty Allah has given us great provision.

**Mother:** How come?

**Father:** Twenty years ago, my father lent a merchant some money. The merchant invested the money. After this long period of time, he came to search for my father. When he saw me, he knew me and I told him that my father had died. Thereupon, he gave me abundant wealth. Praise be to Allah.

**Ahmad, Hind and Mother:** Praise is due to Allah the Sustainer.

## Allah, The Subtle

(Ahmad and his father are sitting and chatting together)

**Father:** What about your daily memorization of the Qur'an Ahmad?

**Ahmad:** It is okay dad. Among what we have memorized today is the verse: ﴿Allah's are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them.﴾ There is one of these names which I don't quite understand dad.

**Father:** Which one son?

**Ahmad:** The Name 'The Subtle.'

**Mother:** (entering the room) Peace be upon you! Ahmad! Please go and buy some things from the market.

**Father:** Ok. Go Ahmad and when you come back, I will tell you the meaning of Allah's Name 'the Subtle'

**Ahmad:** I am at your service. (Ahmad hurries to the street. A speedy car hits Ahmad while he crosses the street and all the people rush over to him.)

**The car driver:** Are you ok son? I am so sorry!

**Ahmad:** (in a very low voice) What happened?

**The driver:** It is okay son. My car hit you but now Allah, the Subtle has rescued you. You might have been killed.

**Ahmad:** (tries to stand up) I want to go back home! Please help me!

(the driver helps him and his parents receive him with love and he goes to bed.)

**Father:** What happened, Ahmad?

**Ahmad:** (in a low voice) a car hit me dad.

**Mother:** How do you feel now dear?

**Ahmad:** It is okay. Allah saved me.

**Father:** (smiling) Now you know the meaning of "the Subtle" Allah has helped you both.

**Ahmad:** Yes dad. Now I know the meaning of the Name.

## **Your Child in the Shade of Sanctified *Hadith***

Almighty Allah says: ﴿Verily in the messenger of Allah you have a good example for him who looks unto Allah and the last Day, and remembers Allah much.﴾ (Al-Ahzab: 21) Allah also says: ﴿And whatsoever the messenger gives you, take it. And whatsoever he forbids, abstain (from it).﴾ (Al-Hashr: 7)

"The Prophet's *Sunnah* is the detailed course for the life of a Muslim individual and society. It represents an explanation of the Qur'an and the true representation of Islam. The Prophet, (PBUH), represented the Qur'anic teachings in his everyday life in all situations, in public as well as in private, in his residence and on journeys, while awake and while asleep, in his relation with relatives, friends, and enemies, in peace time and in war time, in prosperity as well as in adversity." (An Introduction to the *Sunnah*: Yusuf Al-Qaradawi)

Bearing such facts in mind, the Companions and the Successors showed great care for the study of the *Sunnah*, in memorizing, understanding and applying it. Abd ibn Humaid, An-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, Al-Baihaqi and Ibn Hibban all reported that Khalid ibn Usaid said to `Abdullah ibn `Umar: "We find that the prayer of fear and that the prayer of a resident are referred to in the Qur'an while the prayer of a traveler cannot be

found." Ibn `Umar said: "Dear brother! Almighty Allah sent His Prophet Muhammad, (PBUH), while we were at the darkness. Thus, we follow in the footsteps of the Prophet and his behavior on journeys dictated shortening prayer..." When `Umar, (may Allah be pleased with him), appointed Shuraiyh as the judge of Kufah, `Umar wrote to him, "What is clear in the Qur'an is to be applied without questioning. If you fail to find an issue therein, then take recourse to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, (PBUH), if you fail to find the answer there, then try to exert your effort to reach a decision and consult with the righteous people who are knowledgeable."

In our present time, if we really want prosperity in this world and in the world-to-come, then we should follow the illuminating guidance of our predecessors and their brilliant way of dealing with the *Sunnah*. We should teach our children how to memorize the *Hadiths* of the Prophet, understand, and apply them. This care stems from the Prophet's advise: "*May Allah honor him who listens to a Hadith from us, and memorizes it so as to convey it to another person, for a conveyer may be lesser in understanding than the person to whom he conveys the message. Also, a person who conveys jurisprudence may be not a jurist.*" Also: "*May Allah bless a person who listens to some of our sayings and conveys them accurately, for a person to whom the sayings are conveyed may be better in understanding than the conveyer himself.*"

Hence, the importance of the family Theater in delivering the *Hadiths* of the Prophet, (PBUH). Through it we can present the meanings and lessons of the *Hadiths* in an interesting manner. This may be done in two ways:

## **The First Method:**

In this method, we represent the exact words of a Prophetic *Hadith* without any alteration. This is valid so long as the character of the Prophet, (PBUH), is not among the characters represented. Only certain *Hadiths* can be represented in this manner, namely the *Hadiths* in which the Prophet, (PBUH), tells us about the stories of previous Prophets with their folk or the stories of previous nations. In order to give the child a thorough understanding of the *Hadith*, we should give him a chance to play the roles of the characters mentioned in the *Hadith* one by one. Afterwards, he can be asked to say the *Hadith* by heart and give a brief explanation. He can also be given a chance to let his friends learn the *Hadith*. Following are some examples of these *Hadiths*:

## Outcome of Good Deeds

Abu `Abdur-Rahman Abdullah ibn `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with them both), reported that he heard the Prophet, (PBUH), saying: *"Among those before you, there were three persons who were on a journey. When night fell they sought refuge in a cave to spend the night therein. A rock rolled down until it blocked the cave's entrance and prevented them from leaving. They said: 'No escape! The only way-out is to supplicate to Allah and use the best of deeds you have offered.' One of them said: 'O Allah! I had two old parents. It never happened that I or my family drank milk in the evening before them. One day, I went far while grazing my flocks and thus returned late at night. When I returned back, I found them asleep and I did not like to awaken them or drink before them. I kept waiting for them to wake up while my children were in need of water. Yet I did not give to my children until I offered my parents the drink and they satiated their thirst. O Allah! Had this deed of mine been done for Your Sake, grant us a way out. Then, the rock moved and the mouth of the cave was opened a little.' The second man said: 'O Allah! I had a cousin with whom I fell deeply in love. (in another narration he said: 'I loved her as great as a man could ever love a woman') I tried to seduce her (so as to commit sin with her) but she proved reluctant. It was hard times when she came to me (out of need) and I gave her 120 dinars in return for having sex with her. When she*

accepted, I went to commit the sin with her. When I was about to commit the sin (in another narration he said: 'When I sat between her legs') she said: 'Fear Allah and never commit such a sinful deed.' I left her while she was the dearest person to me and left all the gold with her. O Allah! Had this deed of mine been done for Your Sake, grant us a way out.' The rock moved but it was still impossible for them to go out. The third person said: 'O Allah! I had hired some persons to work for me and gave them money in return for their work with the exception of one person, who left before I paid him. I invested his money for him till it produced an immense fortune. Some time later, the man came to me asking for his money. I told him that all the camels, cows, sheep and slaves he saw are his. The man thought I was mocking him but I told him the truth and gave him leave to take whatever he wanted. He took all the money. O Allah! Had this deed of mine been done for Your Sake, grant us a way out.' The rock completely moved and they were able to go out. " (Reported by Al-Shaiykh)

### **The Second Method:**

In this method a child plays a role where he/ she utters the exact words of the *Hadith*. Parents should encourage the child and reward him for, in this way he will become good at memorizing and understanding the *Hadith*, as well as applying its teachings in everyday life.

Following are some samples of this method to make this concept run deep in the hearts and minds of the children:



## **Almighty Allah Decrees that He Does What He Wills**

**Ahmad:** Why are you looking so sad Sa`eed?

**Sa`eed:** The results of the exam were announced and they are not as high as I had expected them to be. **Ahmad:** What happened Sa`eed? Please tell!

**Sa`eed:** My marks are not high. I could be better, just if....

**Ahmad:** (interrupting him) Be content with what Allah has granted you and do not say: "If..."

**Sa`eed:** I am content. I am just reproaching myself.

**Ahmad:** Feel no sadness my dear, you tried your best.. All matters belong to Allah. Now say: "Almighty Allah decreed; this was what He willed."

**Sa`eed:** (surprised) Almighty Allah decreed, this was what Hewilled!

**Ahmad:** This is ok brother. A believer is always content with Allah's decrees. This does not permit him to be lazy or to stop exerting efforts. He should be aware and never say: "If", for it opens the door before Satan's whisperings. In the *Hadith* reported by Muslim, the Prophet, (PBUH), told us: "*Seek what is beneficial for you and seek Allah's help and never lose heart. If*

*you are stricken by misfortune, say not: 'Had it been such and such, the matter would have been different. Rather, say: 'This was what Allah decreed, He does what He wills.'"*

**Sa`eed:** Praise is due to Allah that I met you. May Allah reward you for your advice Ahmad. From now on, I will avoid Ifs. I will keep on saying: "This was what Allah decreed, He does what He wills."

## I Don't Like this Food

(Ahmad meets his friend Khalid in the mosque and they pray together and then walk together for some time )

**Ahmad:** How are you Khalid?

**Khalid:** I'm fine, *Alhamdulillah*.

**Ahmad:** What about having lunch with me?

**Khalid:** That sounds great.

(In Ahmad's house they sit together to eat.)

**Ahmad:** You don't eat well Khalid. Why?

**Khalid:** Frankly, the food is not well-cooked and I don't like to eat many kinds.

**Ahmad:** I will bring you something else.

**Khalid:** No thanks, it is ok. (Khalid washes his hands and leaves and sees his mother.)

**Khalid:** *As-Salam `Alaykum*, dear mother.

**Mother:** *Wa `Alaykum As-Salam*. Welcome home Khalid.

**Khalid:** I am hungry, please fix me some food.

**Mother:** You told me that you were going to have lunch with your friend Ahmad, didn't you?

**Khalid:** I did but the food was nasty.

**Mother:** Did you tell him this.

**Khalid:** Yes, when he asked me why I didn't eat, I told him.

**Mother:** You made a mistake, son. You ought to have avoided giving him this feeling. The Prophet, (PBUH), taught us never to hurt the feelings of others. Abu Hurairah is reported to have said: "Never did the Prophet, (PBUH), express dislike regarding a certain type of food. When he liked a certain type of food he would eat it. If not, he would abstain from eating it."

**Khalid:** Thanks mother. This is a valuable advice, indeed. I will apologize to Ahmad tomorrow and I will never do it again.

## **The Better of the Two is He Who Utters *Salam* First**

(Ahmad stands with `Umar after the `Id prayer)

**Ahmad:** May Allah accept our deeds `Umar!

**`Umar:** May Allah reward you Ahmad. Many happy returns.

**Ahmad:** Did you listen to the sermon?

**`Umar:** Yes, praise to Allah.

**Ahmad:** What do you remember of the sermon?

**`Umar:** He said, `Id is not to wear new clothes but to fear Allah's punishment.'

**Ahmad:** Then pay heed to these words `Umar.

**`Umar:** What do you mean?

**Ahmad:** Ask yourself if you really fear Allah's punishment.

**`Umar:** *Alhamdulillah*, I have fasted the whole month of Ramadan, and observed prayer on time and offered *Taraweeh* and was dutiful to my parents. The Qur'an was always in my daily schedule. What else?

**Ahmad:** Think again `Umar!

**`Umar:** Remind me please.

**Ahmad:** Do you remember our friend Hassan? Both of you have not been on speaking terms for some time, right?

**Umar:** Please stop this. It was he who offended me, he has to apologize.

**Ahmad:** You remember that the Prophet, (PBUH), commanded us not to exceed three days while cutting ties with our fellow Muslims.

**Umar:** But it was he!

**Ahmad:** The Prophet also tells us: *"The better of the two is he who says salam first."*

**Umar:** May Allah reward you Ahmad.

**Ahmad:** Also, the Prophet, (PBUH), says: *"When two Muslims meet each other and shake hands, Allah remits all their sins before they leave each other."* (Abu Dawud)

**Umar:** I will go to Hassan immediately. May Allah forgive our sins and may we be of those who fear His punishment.

## Your Son is a Small Scholar

Al-Bukhari reported Humaid ibn Abdur-Rahmarn saying: "I heard Mu`awiyah saying: *"I heard the Messenger of Allah, (PBUH), saying: 'Whom Allah wants to bless, He will give him good understanding of the religion. I am no more than a disseminator (of knowledge) and it is Allah Who gives (guidance and understanding). This nation will keep on the command of Allah and will never be harmed by adversaries until the Day of Judgment.'"*

A close examination of this *Hadith* will show how important it is to seek religious knowledge. This is carried out when one tries to learn the rules of Islam and all related subjects. He who loses the chance of learning this knowledge, has already lost many good things. At-Tabarani reported the Prophet, (PBUH), as having said: *"Nothing is better in worshipping Almighty Allah than understanding the matters of religion. A scholar is harder for Satan to mislead, than one thousand worshippers."* At-Tabarani also reported: *"The best act of worship is understanding religion (Fiqh)"* This led Ibn `Abbas to say, "Be divinely guided men and scholars of understanding and wisdom."

So that no one would think that learning matters of religion is pertaining to the old people, let's listen to this call of the Companion `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), that reads, "Gain knowledge before you become

masters." This simple, brief statement involves a direct call to all young people for, one of the well-versed scholars of *Hadith* explained this statement and said: "Seek religious knowledge while you are still young and not yet masters, for if you wait, this may prevent you from acquiring knowledge based on the fact that this may make you disdain receiving knowledge from people, who are inferior to you and thus you would become ignorant. "A scholar explained the statement as follows: "Do acquire knowledge while you are still young and not yet married, for, after marriage one becomes the master of a family. "Some other scholars said, "It urges youth to acquire knowledge before their beards get black. Or it might urge old people to acquire knowledge before the black beard they have becomes gray."

What stresses the importance of children's acquiring knowledge is the narration of Abu Dawoud that the Prophet, (PBUH), said: "*Command your child to perform prayer at the age of seven and beat him for not performing it at the age of ten.*" In the version of At-Tirmidhi: "Teach the child prayer while at the age of seven and beat him/her for not performing it at the age of ten." Then how can we command them to perform prayer while they are devoid of knowledge? The two *Hadiths* implicitly contain a call to teach children the *Fiqh* of prayer. The Prophet, (PBUH), used to teach the children himself all they needed to know about the *Fiqh* of prayer.

Abu Dawud, At-Timidhi and An-Nasa'i reported that Al-Hasan ibn `Ali ibn Abi Talib, (may Allah be pleased with them both), said: "*The Prophet, (PBUH), taught me some words to say while performing Witr prayer. They are, 'O Allah! Guide me*



*among those whom You guide. Pardon me among those whom You pardon. Take control of my affairs among those whose affairs You take control of. And save me from the things bad You have predestined for me. It is You who decrees and no one decrees against You. None of those whom You take care of is debased. Glorified is Your Name our Lord and Most Supreme are You.'* "Also, the prophet (PBUH) said: "Son! Never look at any side while in prayer, for this places you at stake. If you could not help doing this, let it be while performing supererogatory prayer, not the obligatory one."

This was the course that the Companions of the Prophet, (PBUH), followed. `Ali ibn Abi Talib, (may Allah be pleased with him), used to call his son Al-Husain, (may Allah be pleased with him), to teach him ablution in a practical way. Abu Dawoud reported that Al-Husain, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: "My father `Ali called me to bring him water for ablution. As I put the water near him, he began washing his hands thrice before putting them in the water and then gargled his mouth thrice and sniffed thrice and washed his face also thrice. Afterwards, he washed his right arm up to the elbow three times and then repeated the same act with his left arm and wiped his forehead once. Lastly, he washed his right foot up to the ankles thrice and again with his left foot. After he finished his ablution, he asked for the rest of the clean, unused water, which I handed to him and he drank from it. I was surprised and he said, 'Do not be surprised! I have seen the Prophet, (PBUH), doing this.'"

A person might ask, it is now clear how important teaching the child the articles of jurisprudence that benefit him is. But what is the relation between this and the family theater?

The answer is that a family theater is a very effective and interesting method to teach the child the articles of jurisprudence in an easy and understandable way. It is recorded that both Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein saw a man who did not know how to perform ablution correctly and they rectified his act and taught him the correct way of ablution in an indirect manner. They pretended that they were having a disagreement on who performs ablution well. Both did it the same way and as the man, who was sought as an arbitrator, understood the lesson, he thanked them both.

Following are some acts that can be played to convey a message.

## Supplication After Ablution

(Ahmad sitting with his father at home while the *Adhan* can be heard)

**Ahmad:** Is this *`Asr* dad?

**Father:** Yes son, let's hurry to perform ablution and go to the mosque.

**Ahmad:** Ok dad. You first.

**Father:** (finishes his ablution and mumbles with some words that could hardly be heard)

**Ahmad:** What are you saying father?

**Father:** Just perform your ablution first and I am going to tell you.

**Ahmad:** (finishes his ablution and accompanies his father to the mosque. While on their way, he says...) Dad! Please tell me what you were saying after making ablution.

**Father:** I was making a supplication.

**Ahmad:** Why do you make supplication at that time?

**Father:** Because our Prophet, (PBUH), taught us to do so.

**Ahmad:** Is there a special supplication for that time dad?

**Father:** (smiling) Yes, a Muslim says: "I testify that there no god but Allah, he is One and no partner is with Him. Then, he

should testify that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger."

**Ahmad:** Could you please guide me to the *Hadith* that tells us of this supplication?

**Father:** `Umar ibn Al-Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), narrated that the Prophet, (PBUH), said: *"If any of you performs ablution perfectly and then says: ' I testify that there is no god but Allah alone Who has no partner and that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, the eight gates of Paradise will be opened for him to choose any door to enter from.'"*

**At-Tirmiddhi added after the *Shahada* (Declaration of Faith):** *"O Allah! Make me of those who repent and who are pure."* (Thereupon, they reached the mosque.)

**Ahmad:** May Allah reward you dad!

## A Young Imam

(The Imam of the mosque enters in the period between the two prayers and sees a child leading a group of children in prayer. Being touched by the situation, he sits and watches them. After they finish their prayer, he calls them...)

**Imam:** One moment dear sons please!

**Children:** At your beck and call, Sheikh. (They approach him and say *Salam*)

**Imam:** *Wa `Alaykum As-Salam.* I am really glad to see you. Just if you have time, I have only a few questions to ask.

**Children:** Yes, it makes us happy our dear Sheikh.

**Imam:** What has brought you to the mosque? Why did you not stay at your houses?

**The Young Imam:** (The child who was leading the other children) We would Allah to prepare a place for us in Paradise. Ahmad, Bukhari and Muslim all reported that the Prophet, (PBUH), "*He who goes frequently to the mosque, Allah will make him an abode in Paradise every time he goes there.*"

**Imam:** Why didn't you pray individually?

**The Young Imam:** We wanted to gain the reward of praying in congregation.

**Imam:** Which reward do you refer to?

**The Young Imam:** Congregational prayer outweighs individual prayer by twenty seven degrees. Ibn `Umar, (may Allah be pleased with them), reported that the Prophet, (PBUH), said: *"Congregational prayer outweighs praying individually by twenty seven degrees."*

**Imam:** But why did you lead the others in prayer?

**The Young Imam:** I compared myself to my mates and found that we are all equal in terms of age and knowledge but I have memorized the Qur'an. When I informed them of this, they chose me to lead them in prayer.

**Imam:** What if you all had learnt the Qur'an by heart?

**The Young Imam:** The one with the sweetest voice and the soundest recitation is chosen.

**Imam:** What if you prove equal again?

**The Young:** Then, the one with the best appearance.

**Imam:** What if you are still equal?

**The Young Imam:** The married one takes priority. But we are all still unmarried.

**Imam:** May Allah bless you son!

**The Young Imam:** May Allah bestow on you good recompense Sheikh!

## *Tayamum (Dry Ablution)*

(Ahmad and his father are visiting their neighbor Salim who was burnt when his house caught fire...)

**Father:** *As-Salam `Alaykum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh.*

**Salim:** *Wa `Alaykum Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuh.*

**Ahmad:** May Allah grant you a speedy recovery uncle Salim. I have prayed for you. You know how much I love you.

**Salim:** May Allah reward you abundantly, Ahmad.

(The *Azan* could be heard from the nearby mosque)

**Father:** May you recover soon brother Salim. We would like to leave now please.

**Salim:** I hoped you could stay longer !

**Ahmad:** We will visit you soon *Inshaa* Allah. We have to leave now to pray.

**Salim:** May Allah reward you both.

(After praying both Ahmad and father return home)

**Ahmad:** I have a question dad!

**Father:** Ok, I am listening son!

**Ahmad:** How does uncle Salim perform ablution?

**Father:** He must perform *Taymum* (dry ablution)?

**Ahmad:** How is *Tayamum* performed, father?

**Father:** One makes his intention first and then mentions the name of Allah. Afterwards, the person pats the dust with his hands and wipes his face and his arms up to the elbows with them.

**Ahmad:** Did the Prophet, (PBUH), order us to do this?

**Father:** Yes son! It is reported that Jabir, (may Allah be pleased with him), said: "We set out on a journey. A man was hit with a stone that wounded him in the head. Afterwards, he slept and had a wet dream. Thus, he asked his companions: 'Am I permitted to perform *Tayamum*?' They answered in the negative. As the man performed *Ghusl* (purifactory bath), he died. When we came to the Prophet, (PBUH), and he was told of the matter, he said: '*they caused him to die, may Allah perish them. Did they ask about the true course of action? Questioning is the remedy of ignorance. It was sufficient for him to perform dry ablution and wipe over his wound and wipe over the bandage and wash the rest of his body.*'"(Reported by Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Ad-Daraqutni and rendered authentic by Ibn As-Sakan)

**Ahmad:** Are there any other cases in which *Tayamum* is permissible?

**Father:** Yes, there are five cases. First, when one cannot find water or the water he finds are insufficient for ablution. Before resorting to *Tayamum*, he is to try to seek water from his mates in case he is on a journey or at any near place. When he becomes sure that there is no water, then he can make *Tayamum*.



**Ahmad:** What about the second case, father?

**Father:** If the water is too cold to the extent that makes him unable to use it or it if causes him harm to use it. It is stipulated to allow *Tayamum* if he is unable to heat it even by enlisting a person to do the job in return of money.

**Ahmad:** And the third case?

**Father:** If water is near him but he fears for his life, his honor or his money or if he fears that the company with him will leave him. This is also true in the case where there is an enemy that prevents him from having access to the water or if there is any other reason that prevents him from reaching it, such as being in a prison.

**Ahmad:** The fourth case?

**Father:** If a person finds an amount of water that suffices only his personal use for drinking for himself or another person even if it is to be given to a domesticated dog. Also, if the person needs the water for cooking or the like, he is permitted to resort to *Tayammum*.

**Ahmad:** What about the fifth case, dad?

**Father:** If he finds water but fears that, while trying to use it, the time of the prayer will be over. In this case, *Tayammum* becomes allowable and a person is in no need to repeat his prayer.

**Ahmad:** Is *Tayammum* has the same effect as ablution, dad?

**Father:** Yes, son. *Tayammum* makes the person able to do any thing that he can do after performing ablution and *Ghusl*, that is to perform prayer, touching the Qur'an and staying in the mosque...etc.

**Ahmad:** Should I make *Tayammum* for each prayer?

**Father:** After performing *Tayammum*, a person is allowed to perform whatever prayer times he wants whether the prayer is obligatory or supererogatory.

**Ahmad:** What nullifies *Tayammum*?

**Father:** All the things that nullify ablution, also nullify *Tayammum*. In addition, finding water renders the *Tayammum* null and void. Also, if one who is unable to make ablution becomes able to use it, then *Tayammum* is no longer needed.

**Ahmad:** May Allah reward you abundantly, father.

**Father:** May Allah bless you, dear son and make you benefit from what you have heard. Now, let's learn how to perform *Tayammum* practically!

**Ahmad:** Ok, father.

## Miscellaneous Plays

### (1) Free Meal

(A room with two beds, where a table with dishes can be found. A basket below the table with vegetables and bread. An old woman is sitting on one of the two beds. A knock at the door can be heard and the woman jumps to her feet...)

**Aunt:** Who is there?

**Ahmad:** Open the door Aunt. It is Ahmad.

**Aunt:** What's up Ahmad? Why are you coming late?

**Ahmad:** It's raining heavily outside.

**Aunt:** What can I do for you? Do you want me to stop the rain?

**Ahmad:** Please Aunt! Stop this! Please open the door and let me in. I just want to spend this night with you. I do not want food.

**Aunt:** (opens the door) So long as you do not want food, you are welcome.

**Ahmad:** Thanks for this hospitality. I just want a towel to dry my head!

**Aunt:** It is over there near the door.

**Ahmad:** (drying his head) Do you find it easy to leave me without food. I have not eaten a single morsel since the early morning.

**Aunt:** Poor baby! But I am also unfortunate; I have eaten nothing since yesterday.

**Ahmad:** Then, we are going to die of starvation.

**Aunt:** You know son that I am an old lady and cannot work. In addition, I have no children to support me. I am stricken by extreme poverty.

**Ahmad:** (thinking for a while) Do you want a free meal Aunt?

**Aunt:** How son?

**Ahmad:** It is so easy, just give me a plate.

**Aunt:** Here it is. What are you going to do?

**Ahmad:** You will see. Just some salt and some water!

**Aunt:** (Surprised) salt and water.

**Ahmad:** Yes, food cannot be food without salt and water.

**Aunt:** (handing a cup of water and a pot of salt over to him) Here is what you want.

**Ahmad:** (mixing the water with salt he takes a spoon out of his pocket) Look! Do you see this spoon Aunt?

**Aunt:** It is a beautiful spoon. What do you do with it?

**Ahmad:** I cannot tell you. No one else can use this spoon. Some cooking oil please?

**Aunt:** (giving him the bottle) Here it is son. What are you going to do now?

**Ahmad:** (pouring the oil in the plate) Just be patient my dear Aunt. You will know everything from A to Z. He puts the plate on the stove. Now, it is the spoon's turn. Some vegetables please.

**Aunt:** Here are the vegetables over there below the table. You can find them in the basket.

**Ahmad:** Thank you dear Aunt. (He puts the vegetables in the plate and stirs with the spoon and then cries:) The meal is now ready. Where is the bread?

**Aunt:** It is in the basket.

**Ahmad:** (puts a bit of bread in the plate and then takes it out) How delicious. Now, you eat my dear Aunt. It is delicious soup.

**Aunt:** (tasting it) Really, it is delicious. I have never tasted better than it.

**Ahmad:** (ridiculing her) It is all due to the grace of Allah and the help of this small spoon.

**Aunt:** (thinking) But this spoon can't prepare soup without any salt or vegetables?

**Ahmad:** (smiling) A spoon does not prepare soup. It just gives us a lesson in love and kindness. It teaches us how to care for our children, relatives, beloved, friends and for the poor.

**Aunt:** (hugging him) forgive me son. It was my miserliness that blinded me and prevented me from taking care, even of myself. May Allah reward you for this good lesson.

## (2) I Have Promised My Father

(Ahmad promised his friends to play football with him. On his way home he met his father...)

**Ahmad:** *As-Salam `Alaykum* Father (kisses his father)

**Father:** *Wa `Alaykum As-Salam.* How was school today?

**Ahmad:** *Al-Hamdulillah* dad. (going out)

**Father:** Won't you eat with us?

**Ahmad:** No dad. All my friends are waiting for me. We're going to begin a hectic match with the team of the neighboring district.

**Father:** Son! I want to talk to you.

**Ahmad:** All my friends are waiting for me dad!

**Father:** I met the principal of your school today and he told me that you have got lower marks. I think it is football that has caused this decline. You go to play and then come back directly to your bed without doing your homework.

**Ahmad:** (crestfallen out of sorrow)

**Father:** I do not oppose practicing sports but I just want you to strike a balance. Now go back to eat and then begin studying your lessons and doing your homework.

**Ahmad:** Ok dad! I will go to study right now.

**Friends:** (calling) Come down Ahmad, we want to begin the match.

**Ahmad:** Sorry dear friends, I have a lot of homework to do right now.

**Friends:** You can put it off until tomorrow, just come out to play.

**Ahmad:** Sorry, I have promised my father not to play until I finish my homework. You can hold the match next Friday.

**Friends:** You make us feel ashamed Ahmad. We will delay the match.

(After days of studying, the day of the match came and Ahmad, participating in it scored the one goal that brought victory to his team. Ahmad says: I have kept my promise and thus got high marks at school and our team won the match)

### (3) Hossam's Weapon

(Some children at the dentist's. One of them, called Ahmad, sits on the dentist's chair...)

**Ahmad:** Ah! That hurt!

**Dentist:** It is not me who causes you pain. It is your decayed tooth that hurts you.

**Ahmad:** Ah! Oh my teeth ache.

**Dentist:** It was sufficient for you just to brush your teeth with toothpaste and prevent this disgusting smell that resulted from all the rotten food left on your teeth.

**Ahmad:** I was really wrong to be so neglectful. **Dentist:** I just want you to brush your teeth after every meal and do this also before going to bed.

**Dentist:** It is now your turn Hossam.

**Dentist:** Well, your teeth are so clean and good Hossam. There is no decay.

**Hossam:** No sir! I always fight the decay with a good weapon.

**Dentist:** What is that weapon son.

**Hossam:** It is Siwak sir that brings Allah's satisfaction and cleans my mouth.

**Dentist:** Yes, you are quite right. It is really a good weapon. All of you should copy Hossam.



## (4) Temporary Success

(Sitting inside their class, each pupil has his exam paper in his hand)

**Teacher:** You have the monthly exam papers. Seek Allah's help and beware of cheating.

**Magdy:** (talking to himself) I have not studied well. What should I do? (Magdy cheats the whole answer from his friend Ahmad while both Ahmad and the teacher are unaware)

**Teacher:** (After the results have appeared) You have got the full mark Magdy. I hope you really deserve it.

**Magdy:** Of course. I do study hard these days. Besides, I'm a brilliant student.

**Magdy's father:** How did you get these high marks while you did not study hard.

**Magdy:** I cheated in the exam and copied my friend's answer.  
**Magdy's father:** Shame on you! You have to tell the teacher to hold the exam again. You know cheating is prohibited.

**Magdy:** Ok dad! (says to himself) I won't make myself a den of laughter by telling the teacher.

(After some days pass the next exam comes and Magdy meets his friend Ahmad)

**Ahmad:** You seem confident Magdy. You did well in the last exam. I hope your success is repeated.

**Magdy:** Thanks. It is only those who sow that should reap.

**Teacher:** (entering the class) Stand up Magdy. You won't sit beside Ahmad. It is not your usual place.

**Magdy:** How?

**Teacher:** Today, it is the alphabetical order of the names that decides where you can sit.

**Magdy:** Ok. (says to himself) I will never succeed. I have not studied even a single word. This is a real good lesson. May Allah forgive me! O Allah! Do not scandalize me in this world and in the afterlife.

## (5) Make Use of Your Youth

(Old age comes onto the stage in the form of an old woman)

**Old age:** Ah! O Allah help me. I have a splitting headache.

**Childhood:** Who are you madam? Why do you feel pain?

**Old age:** I am old age.

**Childhood:** Weird! What a strange name!

**Old age:** Yes, you are right. You are still young and know nothing. Then, who are you?

**Childhood:** With pleasure. I am childhood.

**Old age:** I expected this as soon as I saw you.

**Childhood:** You say you know me while I do not know you, how come?

**Old age:** ( laughing: We are one)

**Childhood:** What is this fuss?

**Old age:** Don't be surprised. I was once a child, just like you.

**Childhood:** A child!

**Old age:** Yes, I was a child enjoying all the beauty of childhood, playing here and there.

**Childhood:** Then what happened to you?

**Old age:** It is the passage of years.

**Childhood:** Do you think I am going to be like you one day?

**Old age:** Yes, this is the normal law of life.

**Childhood:** You must be mistaken!

**Old age:** I used to say this when I was your age. I used to deny this fact. Just think about yourself. You were a baby some time ago and now you have grown.

**Childhood:** (thinking for a while) Maybe. (sitting in a corner feeling extremely sad)

**Old age:** Don't feel sad. **Childhood:** How? I am going to be old!

**Old age:** This is Allah's laws.

**Childhood:** Yes, but...

**Old age:** Do not be negative. Try to live your life and make the best use of your time.

**Childhood:** How?

**Old age:** Haven't you read the *Hadith*: "Make use of five things before another five things overwhelm you... Your youth before Old age overwhelms you."

**Childhood:** Yes, I heard it. But what does it mean?

**Old age:** Youth is a great blessing. Being young, you enjoy strength of body, memory and initiative. You should use all these blessings wisely.

**Childhood:** How can I do this?

**Old age:** You should organize your time. Give some time to study, reading, playing, and doing charitable deeds. Do not

waste your time, lest you should be regretful when you are old.

**Childhood:** Thank you madam. I also want to advise all children to make the best use of their childhood.

## **(6) Your Luxury Before You Get Busy**

(Mr. Carefree is stretching himself on the ground with his left hand over the right one while Mr. Busy is carrying his papers, pens and books. He stares at Mr. Carefree and kicks him so that Mr. Carefree jumps to his feet.)

**Mr. Carefree:** Who are you? Why are you kicking me like this?

**Mr. Busy:** You do not know? Just look at me well.

**Mr. Carefree:** I do not know you?

**Mr. Busy:** Look well again. I am Mr. Busy.

**Mr. Carefree:** Just leave me alone. I do not know you.

**Mr. Busy:** But I really know you. You are Mr. Carefree.

**Mr. Carefree:** You are right. But how do you know me?

**Mr. Busy:** Before, I was just like you.

**Mr. Carefree:** You were like me, how come? What happened to you?

**Mr. Busy:** You see, I am busy all the time now. I cannot even find time to eat.

**Mr. Carefree:** (laughing) How can any one forget to eat?

**Mr. Busy:** You can laugh as you want., but this is the reality. You have to heed the lesson before it is too late to regret.

**Mr. Carefree:** Lesson! Which lesson?

**Mr. Busy:** You are right. I was just like you but... (looking remorseful and thinking while in a corner of the stage)

**Mr. Carefree:** But what happened?

**Mr. Busy:** Everything changed. Now I am full of regrets. Haven't you heard the *Hadith*: "Make use of five things before other five things overwhelm you... Your free time before you become busy."

**Mr. Carefree:** Yes, but what does it mean?

**Mr. Busy:** Free time is a blessing which we should use in beneficial things.

**Mr. Carefree:** How?

**Mr. Busy:** Just organize your time to the best of your ability in matters like reading, work and other things.

**Mr. Carefree:** Thank you dear friend. My message to my friends is that they should make the best use of their time before they become busy.

## (7) Simsim and Samasim in the Lab

**Simsim:** (holding a ruler) Look at this plastic ruler!

**Samasim:** It looks like a good ruler.

**Simsim:** I will put it on the table. Half will be on the table and the other will be off the table.

**Samasim:** Why?

**Simsim:** I will put my hands on one of the ends and hammer the other with my other hand.

**Samasim:** The ruler makes a noise that sounds like an angry person.

**Simsim:** What do you think of this invention?

**Samasim:** Well. Just try to make the external part shorter and repeat.

**Simsim:** (He did what his sister asked him to do) Yes, the sound is no more beautiful or sharp. A good suggestion!

**Samasim:** Now, let's do it the other way round!

**Simsim:** It now makes a slow, angry and rough sound.

**Samasim:** Let's go to mum to show her our invention.

**Mother:** (after watching their invention) It is a good thing. But it is not an invention. It is just a discovery.

**Simsim:** Why mum?



**Mother:** Because it already exists.

**Simsim:** Then, what is new?

**Mother:** You just discovered that a ruler produces this sound due to the shaking.

**Simsim:** Shaking?

**Mother:** Yes, it is a result of vibration.

**Simsim:** Well, well.

**Mother:** A man hears a sound when it reaches twenty vibrations per second.

**Samasim:** What if the vibrations are less than twenty per second?

**Mother:** The sound will be so low and he will not be able to hear it.

**Simsim:** Then, what is the maximum number of vibrations we can hear per second?

**Mother:** Up to sixteen thousand vibrations per second. This is the maximum. It also harms the ear.

**Samasim:** This is why we should keep our tone of voice average. **Mother:** Yes, a person should lower his voice.

**Simsim:** If we all talk loudly, the whole world will be in a fuss.

**Mother:** May Allah bless you Simsim. It is now clear that invention means bringing about something that did not exist before, while discovery is finding something that already exists.

**Samasim:** Yes, we also know the number of vibrations a human ear can bear. A polite person does not raise his voice more than what is needed.

**Simsim:** May Allah reward you mother for this beneficial information.

## (8) Sayyed and Satan's Temptation

(Lying in his bed, Sayyed hears the sound of the *Adhan* for *salatul Fajr* (the call to the dawn prayer...))

**Satan:** It is so cold. Just sleep for some more moments. Why go out in this cold weather?

**Sayyed:** Yes. It is so cold. There is still some more time before the sun rises. (then he falls into a deep sleep)

**His Mother:** Come on. Wake up for prayer my son.

**Sayyed:** Ok mum. I am getting up.

**Satan:** How can you get up? It is so cold. Just let your mother go out and sleep again. If she asks you about praying, tell her that you have prayed but she did not see you when you went out for prayer.

**Sayyed:** Good idea. (Sayyed keeps on sleeping till it is after sunrise and then gets up lazily)

**Satan:** You feel hungry. Just have your breakfast and then you can pray. Come on, do not waste your time!

**Sayyed:** It is really a good idea. But I am not hungry right now.

**Satan:** You can go out to play with your friends until you feel hungry.

**Sayyed:** What a wonderful idea!

**Sayyed:** (seeing his friends playing) I would like to play too.

**Ibraheem:** You can wait till this match is over and then join the next one.

**Satan:** Do not stay like this! Have you forgotten that Ibraheem beat you in the last two games?

**Sayyed:** Be quiet Ibraheem! I am going to play anyway.

**Satan:** (Whispering to Ibraheem) Sayyed seems to be stronger than you. You should be hard with him.

**Ibraheem:** Off you go! I am going to teach you a lesson.

**Satan:** (to Sayyed) If you leave, the boys will say you are a coward and Ibraheem is a brave boy.

**Sayyed:** I am going to play anyway. Just show me what are you going to do!

**Ibraheem:** Well! Then take this bunch! (The *Adhan* of *Zuhr* is heard from the nearby mosque and the Satan flees on his knees.) The fight ends with Sayyed lying beaten on the ground.

**Sayyed:** (Talking to himself) I have come to know the reason for all this trouble. It is this cursed Satan that has prevented me from prayer and pulled me into all this fuss. I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.

**Part Three**

**Let's Start From Here**



## **Are You a Good Father and Are You a Good Mother?**

Dear honorable father and mother, we feel your overwhelming love for your children. You care for them and you wish to make them happy. Your hearts ache if any harm comes to them. You want all goodness for them.

However, sympathy alone is not enough, because the time will soon come when we will all stand before Allah, Exalted and Blessed be He, for judgement. We will be judged for everything we have done for or against our children.

Ibnu `Umar, (may Allah be pleased with him), quoted the Prophet, (PBUH), as saying, *'All of you are guardians and you are responsible for your charges. The Imam (ruler) is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects; the man is a guardian and is responsible for his charges (his family); the woman is a guardian over her husband's house and is responsible for her charges (the family); a slave is a guardian over his master's property and is responsible for his charges (the property). All of you are guardians and you are responsible for your charges.'* Agreed upon *Hadith*

Ibn Hibban and An-Nissai' reported in their authentic books that Allah's Messenger, (PBUH), said, *'Allah will ask each guardian about his charges, has he preserved or wasted them? He will ask each man about his family...'*

Well, are we preparing ourselves for that day? Can we answer that question honestly?

Honorable father...loving mother, thank Allah that the chance has not yet passed. Allah is always there, accepting Tawbah (repentance) from His servants. So, let's start honestly to reckon ourselves to know the positive aspects of our relationship with our children and try to develop them, and also to know the shortcomings and weaknesses and find solutions for them. This can be achieved through giving honest answers to the following questionnaire. May this questionnaire be a witness for us on the Day of Reckoning.



## Questionnaire

### **First: Questions for both parents**

- 1- Do you pray to Allah to make your children righteous and preserve them from all harm?
- 2- Do you guide your children to observe the teachings of the Glorious Qur'an, by memorization, understanding and application?
- 3- Do you try to make your little ones follow the Prophet's honorable *Sunnah*, by memorization, understanding and practice?
- 4- Do you encourage your children to memorize the Finest Names of Allah, understand them and follow their guidance?
- 5- Do you try to implant love for the Prophet, (PBUH), in your children's hearts?
- 6- Do you teach your children to go to the mosque regularly?
- 7- Do you try to implant love for the Prophet's Companions, (may Allah be pleased with them all), in your children's hearts and show them the importance of following their guidance?
- 8- Do you teach your children *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) in a simple way?

- 9- Do you relate to your children the stories of the Prophet's Companions, their successors and all righteous and great personalities?
- 10- Do you direct your children to extract the moral lessons from the stories you relate to them and make use of their guidance?
- 11- Do you try to impart Islamic moral values like, truthfulness, trustworthiness and honesty?
- 12- Do you teach your sons and daughters to abide by the Islamic dress code and ignore non-Islamic modes? Do you teach your daughters the manners of a righteous, Muslim lady?
- 13- Do you direct your sons to the Islamic manners and practices and distract them from non-Islamic modes of clothes and hairstyles?
- 14- Are you keen on choosing good Islamic names for your children?
- 15- Do you read some books about sound methods of education?
- 16- Do you teach your children to abide by the manners of speaking and refrain from using bad words?
- 17- Do you try to imbue your children's hearts with love for people, supporting the oppressed, the needy and the weak?
- 18- Do you observe your children's level at school and help them to advance in seeking knowledge for Allah's sake to uplift the Islamic call and support the community?
- 19- Do you spend some time to play with your children and converse with them?

- 20- Do you try to implant in your children a love for reading, both theoretically and practically?
- 21- Do you provide your children with useful books and magazines to protect them from temptation?
- 22- Do you guide your children to read about what is going on, especially in the Islamic world?
- 23- Do you advise your children to keep company with good people and keep away from bad friends?
- 24- Do you care for the hygienic state of your children and guide them to participate in sports?
- 25- Do you think about your children's future in the Hereafter as you think of their future in this world?
- 26- Do you reckon yourself from time to time to check the educational method you use with your children?
- 27- Do you direct your children to take lessons from the situations they face in their lives?
- 28- Do you help your children to invent and discover using available practical and theoretical methods?
- 29- Do you guide your children to appropriate TV programs and distract them from immoral programs?
- 30- Do you teach your children to love their relatives and keep good relations with them?
- 31- Are you keen on teaching your children Arabic, the language of the Glorious Qur'an, so that they will love, understand and take pride in it?

32- Do you stand as a good example for your children that they may follow your words and deeds?

33-Do you follow a specific plan in rearing your children?

### **Second: Questions related to the father alone**

1- Are you keen on maintaining your family with *Halal* (lawful) gains, allowing no *Haram* (unlawful) gains in your life?

2- Do you order your wife and children to observe prayers, especially *Fajr* (dawn) prayer?

3- Do you take your family on nice journeys when you have time?

4- Do you provide your children with useful games and toys that comply with Islamic teachings?

### **Third: Questions pertaining to the mother alone**

1- Do you make sure the house is clean and tidy and that there is a comfortable atmosphere in your house?

2- Do you teach your children to keep the house clean and neat, and teach them to share in carrying out the chores?

3- Do you teach your children to observe prayer and help them to stick to it?

4- Do you care for your children's health and provide them with hygienic food, without excessiveness nor negligence?

Now, dear honorable father and loving mother, you can judge to which extent you are successful in rearing your children.

**First**, count your total score; give yourself (3) marks for (always), (2) marks for (sometimes), (1) mark for (rarely) and nothing for (never).

**Second**, add your marks together to find your total score, which will decide your success or failure in rearing your children, as follows:

- 1- If you get more than 100 marks, you are an extremely successful parent.
- 2- If you get between (75-100), then you are also successful and you have the necessary characteristics for success.
- 3- If you get between (50-75), then you are on the right way, but you have to exert more effort in rearing your children.
- 4- If you get less than 45, then you are in a very critical situation, and you have to adjust yourself and apply a new approach with your children.

## The Starting Point

Allah, the Almighty says, ﴿And you mention of our bondmen, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, men of parts and vision.﴾ (Sad:45).

In his exegesis of the Glorious Qur'an, Imam Ibn Kathir, (may Allah bless him), said that the phrase, "men of parts and vision," refers to good deeds, useful knowledge, true faith and strong insight. Ibn `Abbas, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, "The phrase "men of parts" means strong people, and "and vision" means understanding Islamic jurisprudence well. Mujahid said that "men of parts" refers to persistence in worshipping Allah, Exalted be He, while "and vision" refers to pursuing the truth. Qatadah and As-Suddi said, "They were imbued with true faith and strong insight in matters of religion."

Moreover, Ibn Al-Qayyim, (may Allah bless him), maintained that "men of parts" here means firmness in the field of truth, and "and vision" means understanding religion. That is to say, Allah has described them as having full understanding of the truth and perfect application of it.

In order to be with such people on the Day of Resurrection, we have to follow in their footsteps. We should, as fathers and mothers pursue knowledge in the field of education to understand the educational methods and objectives and make use of them in rearing our children; not only to understand them, but to apply them practically in our life.

The starting point now is to turn the educational methods, styles, ideas and suggestions we have learnt in this book into a practical plan that suits our children and their abilities. Then we have to do our utmost to apply a plan successfully. Here are some guidelines for such a plan:

- 1- Realizing the truth of our life through answering the previous questionnaire, specifying our time of work and spare time along with defining the exact mental and physical abilities of your children.
- 2- Setting a specific period for this plan (six months, a year, two years). It is, by and large, preferable to make it annual.
- 3- Stating the objectives of our plan within the specified period. Your plan should be specific, objective and simple in its language, so that the extent of its success can be easily measured.
- 4- Selecting the methods we will apply to achieve our objectives.
- 5- Applying such methods according to a specific timetable.
- 6- Starting application at once.
- 7- The plan and the extent of success should be reviewed monthly if possible. There should also be some kind of a daily, weekly or monthly self-estimation.

## A Successful Educational Plan

To help parents apply the educational methods, suggestions and ideas mentioned in this book, we present an educational plan with clear objectives and a carefully selected medium. It is made according to a specific timetable. This plan should be helpful for most families. However, every family can adjust the items of this plan to tailor it to their circumstances and abilities.

Timetable	Methods	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-One play and one story per month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Imparting the significance of the Finest Names of Allah through the house theater or some stories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-Spreading love and intimacy among members of the family and the whole society.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Three times a week</li> <li>-Daily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Accompanying children to the mosque.</li> <li>-Praying to Allah to guide and bestow success on the children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2- Relate children with their Lord through love, hope and fear.</li> <li>3- Connect children to the Qur'an through memorization, comprehension and application.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One play or a Qur'anic story twice per week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Encouraging children to memorize the Qur'an through the house theater or Qur'anic stories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4- Relate children to the Prophet's Sunnah through memorizing, understanding and application.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-One Hadith every two weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Encouraging children to memorize Hadith</li> </ul>	



Timetable	Methods	Objectives
<p>-One juristic ruling every two weeks</p> <p>-Daily</p> <p>-One moral value per week</p> <p>-Once a month</p> <p>-Once a week</p> <p>-A book or a magazine per month</p> <p>-Once every 15 days</p> <p>-Twice a year</p>	<p>through relating its occasion during the house theater.</p> <p>-Using the house theater to teach the child jurisprudence.</p> <p>-Encouraging children to observe the daily prayers, especially Fajr.</p> <p>-Teaching the child the manners of the Prophet at the mosque, on eating and so on through relating some incidents about him on the house theater.</p> <p>-Accompanying the child on visits to some relatives, to the sick or to a library.</p> <p>-Relating some stories, deriving moral lessons and applying them.</p> <p>-Helping the child to collect his own library.</p> <p>-Using books and toys to relate stories to the child.</p> <p>-Taking children on a journey with the family.</p>	<p>5- I Imbue children's hearts with love for the Prophets, their companions, successors and the righteous and follow their guidance.</p> <p>6- Teach children simplified jurisprudence to apply in their worship, transactions and habits.</p> <p>7-Teach children to go the mosque regularly.</p> <p>8- Teach children Islamic moral values.</p> <p>9- Accustom children to regular reading of useful works.</p> <p>10- Encourage children to advance and be creative.</p> <p>11-Keeness on children's physical strength to be hard workers.</p> <p>12-Protecting children from moral degeneration.</p>

Timetable	Methods	Objectives
-A toy every two months	-Choosing children's toys on the basis mentioned before.	
-Twice a week	-Watching the child's performance at school.	
-Twice a year	-Visiting the school and meeting his teachers to know his level.	
-Making one toy per month	-Helping the child in making his own toys out of available materials.	
-Implementing an idea every month	-Helping the child to carry out some practical ideas (house workshop).	
-Twice a week	-Sharing the child's scientific ideas, entertainment, puzzles...	
-Twice a week	-Joining the child in playing some sports at home or any other suitable place.	
-Twice a week	-Allowing the child to share in the chores.	
-Daily	-Teaching the child to care for his bed, clothing and belongings.	
-Daily	-Observing what children watch on TV explaining to them the good and evil.	

Timetable	Methods	Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Daily</li> <li>-One and a half hours per week</li> <li>-Once every 15 days</li> <li>-Once a week</li> <li>-Daily (10 minutes before going to bed)</li> <li>-Once every two months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Parents ought to read educational books and discuss them.</li> <li>-Know all relevant information about the child's friends and giving him advice in this concern.</li> <li>-Following the news and reading newspapers with the child.</li> <li>-Holding a family conference to discuss problems and try to find solutions.</li> <li>-Parents reckon themselves daily.</li> <li>-Reviewing the plan; its positive and negative aspects and making any necessary adjustments,</li> </ul>	

## **N.B.**

Applying this plan for a year will result in the following outcomes, *Insha'a Allah*:

- 1- The child will fully grasp the meanings of 12 of the Finest Names of Allah.
- 2- Enjoy two family journeys.
- 3- The child would go to the mosque 144 times.
- 4- The parents would pray for their children 360 times.
- 5- The child would memorize 24 Prophetic *Hadiths*.
- 6- The child would learn 24 juristic rulings and apply them.
- 7- Six toys would be bought for the child.
- 8- Playing sport with the child will occur about 96 times.
- 9- The child would memorize 24 verses and apply them.
- 10- The child would be helped with his study about 50 times.
- 11- Cooperating with the children in their chores 360 times.
- 12- Paying two visits to the children's school.
- 13- Observing the TV programs the children watch 360 times.
- 14- Helping children to perform prayer regularly for 360 days containing 1800 prayers.
- 15- Helping the child to make 12 toys out of available materials.
- 16- Spending 72 hours reading educational books.
- 17- Providing your child with 12 books and magazines.
- 18- Relating stories from story books and performing them with the child 24 times.

- 19- Participating with the child in applying 12 scientific ideas.
- 20- Relating stories of the Prophet, his Companions and their successors 48 times, deriving from them many moral lessons and applying them.
- 21- Playing with your children 96 times.
- 22- Discovering information about your child's companions and giving advice in this concern (theoretically and practically) 24 times.
- 23- Watching TV news and reading newspapers and magazines with your children 48 times.
- 24- Accompanying the child on a visit to a relative, a sick person, a library or so, 12 times.
- 25- Caring for your children and helping them to care for themselves 360 times.
- 26- Gathering with your family 48 times.
- 27- Imparting about 48 Prophetic principles (theoretically and practically) to your children.
- 28- Making a daily reckoning 360 times.
- 29- Reviewing the plan 6 times.

From this, we pray to Allah to make these deeds counted in our balance of good on the Day of Resurrection. May Allah enlighten our graves with them and make them a shield from Hellfire when neither money nor children will be of any avail, except for one who will meet his Lord with a pure heart, Amen!

## *Wird Al-Muhasabah*

### **(Daily Self-Reckoning)**

Abu Nu`aim reported in his book "*Al-Hilah*" on the authority of Thabit Ibn El-Hajjaj that `Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, (may Allah be pleased with him), said, "Weigh yourselves before you get weighed, and reckon yourselves before you will be reckoned (i.e. reckon yourselves and see whether your good deeds outweigh the evil ones or not). If you reckon yourselves now (in this life), this will make tomorrow's reckoning (on the Day of Reckoning) easier. Make yourselves ready for the great exposure (the Day of Judgment), ﴿ *On that day you will be exposed; not a secret of you will be hidden.* ﴾ (Al-Haqqah: 18).

Hence we, fathers and mothers, must take a few minutes for self reckoning everyday before going to bed, to review our deeds, especially with our children. If we have done good, let's thank Allah Who guided us to it; if we did evil, we must repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness. In so doing, we will sleep with a pure heart, full of true faith.

Here are some questions that help one reckon oneself everyday.

- 1- Have you prayed to Allah to make your children good people and to bestow success on them in this life and in the Hereafter?

- 2- Have you striven hard to observe good deeds and abandon evil, so that Allah may guide your children by virtue of your good deeds?
- 3- Have you encouraged your children to observe the daily prayers, especially the *Fajr* prayer?
- 4- Have you been a good example for your children today?
- 5- Have you guided your children today to the proper TV programs and drawn their attention away from bad programs?
- 6- Have you pursued *Halal* gains to maintain your children with?
- 7- Have you carried out the daily chores today with your children?
- 8- Do you know the experiences which your children had today and have you given them due advice?
- 9- Have you been dutiful to your parents today, so that your children will learn practically to be dutiful to you?
- 10- Have you reviewed the educational plan you use with your children and applied it persistently ?

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